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# A THORNY PATH

(PER ASPERA)

BY

GEORG EBERS

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

By CLARA BELL

IN TWO VOLUMES

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## A THORNY PATH.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE green screen slowly rose, covering the lower portion of the broad studio window where Heron, the gem-cutter, was at work. It was Melissa, the artist's daughter, who had pulled it up, with bended knees and outstretched arms, panting for breath.

"That is enough!" cried her father's impatient voice. He glanced up at the flood of light which the blinding sun of Alexandria was pouring into the room, as it did every autumn afternoon; but as soon as the shadow fell on his work-table the old man's busy fingers were at work again, and he heeded his daughter no more.

An hour later Melissa again, and without any bidding, pulled up the screen as before, but it was so much too heavy for her that the effort brought the blood into her calm, fair face, as the deep, rough "That is enough" was again heard from the work-table.

Then silence reigned once more. Only the artist's low whistling as he worked, or the patter and pipe of the birds in their cages by the window, broke the stillness of the spacious room, till the voice and step of a man were presently heard in the ante-room.

Heron laid by his graver and Melissa her gold embroidery, and the eyes of father and daughter met for the first time for some hours. The very birds seemed excited, and a starling, which had sat moping since the screen had shut the sun out, now cried out, "Olympias!" Melissa rose, and after a swift glance round the room she went to the door, come who might.

Ay, even if the brother she was expecting should bring a companion, or a patron of art who desired her father's work, the room need not fear a critical eye; and she was so well assured of the faultless neatness of her own person, that she only passed a hand over her brown hair, and with an involuntary movement pulled her simple white robe more tightly through her girdle.

Heron's studio was as clean and as simple as his daughter's attire, though it seemed larger than enough for the purpose it served, for only a very small part of it was occupied by the artist, who sat as if in exile behind the work-table on which his belongings were laid out: a set of small instruments in a case, a tray filled with shells and bits of onyx and other agates, a yellow ball of Cyrenian modeling-wax, pumice-stone, bottles, boxes, and bowls.

Melissa had no sooner crossed the threshold, than the sculptor drew up his broad shoulders and brawny person, and raised his hand to fling away the slender stylus he had been using; however, he thought better of it, and laid it carefully aside with the other tools. But this act of self-control must have cost the hot-headed, powerful man a great effort; for he shot a fierce look at the instrument which had had so narrow an escape, and gave it a push of vexation with the back of his hand.

Then he turned towards the door, his sunburnt

face looking surly enough, in its frame of tangled gray hair and beard; and, as he waited for the visitor whom Melissa was greeting outside, he tossed back his big head, and threw out his broad, deep chest, as though preparing to wrestle.

Melissa presently returned, and the youth whose hand she still held was, as might be seen in every feature, none other than the sculptor's son. Both were dark-eyed, with noble and splendid heads, and in stature perfectly equal; but while the son's countenance beamed with hearty enjoyment, and seemed by its peculiar attractiveness to be made—and to be accustomed—to charm men and women alike, his father's face was expressive of disgust and misanthropy. It seemed, indeed, as though the newcomer had roused his ire, for Heron answered his son's cheerful greeting with no word but a reproachful "At last!" and paid no heed to the hand the youth held out to him.

Alexander was no doubt inured to such a reception; he did not disturb himself about the old man's ill-humor, but slapped him on the shoulder with rough geniality, went up to the work-table with easy composure, took up the vice which held the nearly finished gem, and, after holding it to the light and examining it carefully, exclaimed: "Well done, father! You have done nothing better than that for a long time."

"Poor stuff!" said his father.

But his son laughed.

"If you will have it so. But I will give one of my eyes to see the man in Alexandria who can do the like!"

At this the old man broke out, and shaking his fist he cried: "Because the man who can find anything worth doing, takes good care not to waste

his time here, making divine art a mere mockery by such trifling with toys! By Sirius! I should like to fling all those pebbles into the fire, the onyx and shells and jasper and what not, and smash all those wretched tools with these fists, which were certainly made for other work than this."

The youth laid an arm round his father's stalwart neck, and gayly interrupted his wrath. "Oh yes, Father Heron, Philip and I have felt often enough that they know how to hit hard."

"Not nearly often enough," growled the artist, and the young man went on:

"That I grant, though every blow from you was equal to a dozen from the hand of any other father in Alexandria. But that those mighty fists on human arms should have evoked the bewitching smile on the sweet lips of this Psyche, if it is not a miracle of art, is—"

"The degradation of art," the old man put in; but Alexander hastily added:

"The victory of the exquisite over the coarse."

"A victory!" exclaimed Heron, with a scornful flourish of his hand. "I know, boy, why you are trying to garland the oppressive yoke with flowers of flattery. So long as your surly old father sits over the vice, he only whistles a song and spares you his complaints. And then, there is the money his work brings in!"

He laughed bitterly, and as Melissa looked anxiously up at him, her brother exclaimed:

"If I did not know you well, master, and if it would not be too great a pity, I would throw that lovely Psyche to the ostrich in Scopas's court-yard; for, by Herakles! he would swallow your gem more easily than we can swallow such cruel taunts. We do indeed bless the Muses that work brings you

some surcease of gloomy thoughts. But for the rest—I hate to speak the word gold. We want it no more than you, who, when the coffer is full, bury it or hide it with the rest. Apollodorus forced a whole talent of the yellow curse upon me for painting his men's room. The sailor's cap, into which I tossed it with the rest, will burst when Seleukus pays me for the portrait of his daughter; and if a thief robs you, and me too, we need not fret over it. My brush and your stylus will earn us more in no time. And what are our needs? We do not bet on quail-fights; we do not run races; I always had a loathing for purchased love; we do not want to wear a heap of garments bought merely because they take our fancy—indeed, I am too hot as it is under this scorching sun. The house is your own. The rent paid by Glaukias, for the work-room and garden you inherited from your father, pays for half at least of what we and the birds and the slaves eat. As for Philip, he lives on air and philosophy; and, besides, he is fed out of the great bread-basket of the Museum."

At this point the starling interrupted the youth's vehement speech with the appropriate cry, "My strength! my strength!" The brother and sister looked at each other, and Alexander went on with genuine enthusiasm:

"But it is not in you to believe us capable of such meanness. Dedicate your next finished work to Isis or Serapis. Let your masterpiece grace the goddess's head-gear, or the god's robe. We shall be quite content, and perhaps the immortals may restore your joy in life as a reward."

The bird repeated its lamentable cry, "My strength!" and the youth proceeded with increased vehemence:

"It would really be better that you should throw your vice and your graver and your burnisher, and all that heap of dainty tools, into the sea, and carve an Atlas such as we have heard you talk about ever since we could first speak Greek. Come, set to work on a colossus! You have but to speak the word, and the finest clay shall be ready on your modeling-table by to-morrow, either here or in Glaukias's work-room, which is indeed your own. I know where the best is to be found, and can bring it to you in any quantity. Scopas will lend me his wagon. I can see it now, and you valiantly struggling with it till your mighty arms ache. You will not whistle and hum over that, but sing out with all your might, as you used when my mother was alive, when you and your apprentices joined Dionysus's drunken rout. Then your brow will grow smooth again; and if the model is a success, and you want to buy marble, or pay the founder, then out with your gold, out of the coffer and its hiding-place! Then you can make use of all your strength, and your dream of producing an Atlas such as the world has not seen—your beautiful dream—will become a reality!"

Heron had listened eagerly to his son's rhapsody; but he now cast a timid glance at the table where the wax and tools lay, pushed the rough hair from his brow, and broke in with a bitter laugh: "My dream, do you say—my dream? As if I did not know too well that I am no longer the man to create an Atlas! As if I did not feel, without your words, that my strength for it is a thing of the past!"

"Nay, father," exclaimed the painter. "Is it right to cast away the sword before the battle? And even if you did not succeed—"

"You would be all the better pleased," the sculp-

tor put in. "What surer way could there be to teach the old simpleton, once for all, that the time when he could do great work is over and gone?"

"That is unjust, father; that is unworthy of you," the young man interrupted in great excitement; but his father went on, raising his voice; "Silence, boy! One thing at any rate is left to me, as you know—my keen eyes; and they did not fail me when you two looked at each other as the starling cried, 'My strength!' Ay, the bird is in the right when he bewails what was once so great and is now a mere laughing-stock. But you—you ought to reverence the man to whom you owe your existence and all you know; you allow yourself to shrug your shoulders over your own father's humbler art, since your first pictures were fairly successful.—How puffed up he is, since, by my devoted care, he has been a painter! How he looks down on the poor wretch who, by the pinch of necessity, has come down from being a sculptor of the highest promise to being a mere gem-cutter! In the depths of your soul—and I know it—you regard my laborious art as half a handicraft. Well, perhaps it deserves no better name; but that you—both of you—should make common cause with a bird, and mock the sacred fire which still burns in an old man, and moves him to serve true and noble art and to mold something great—an Atlas such as the world has never seen on a heroic scale; that—"

He covered his face with his hands and sobbed aloud. And the strong man's passionate grief cut his children to the heart, though, since their mother's death, their father's rage and discontent had many a time ere now broken down into childish lamentation.

To-day no doubt the old man was in worse spirits



than usual, for it was the day of the Nekysia—the feast of the dead kept every autumn; and he had that morning visited his wife's grave, accompanied by his daughter, and had anointed the tombstone and decked it with flowers. The young people tried to comfort him; and when at last he was more composed and had dried his tears, he said, in so melancholy and subdued a tone that the angry blusterer was scarcely recognizable: "There—leave me alone; it will soon be over. I will finish this gem to-morrow, and then I must do the Serapis I promised Theophilus, the high-priest. Nothing can come of the Atlas. Perhaps you meant it in all sincerity, Alexander; but since your mother left me, children, since then—my arms are no weaker than they were; but in here—what it was that shriveled, broke, leaked away—I can not find words for it. If you care for me—and I know you do—you must not be vexed with me if my gall rises now and then; there is too much bitterness in my soul. I can not reach the goal I strive after and was meant to win; I have lost what I loved best, and where am I to find comfort or compensation?"

His children tenderly assured him of their affection, and he allowed Melissa to kiss him, and stroked Alexander's hair.

Then he inquired for Philip, his eldest son and his favorite; and on learning that he, the only person who, as he believed, could understand him, would not come to see him this day above all others, he again broke out in wrath, abusing the degeneracy of the age and the ingratitude of the young.

"Is it a visit which detains him again?" he inquired, and when Alexander thought not, he exclaimed contemptuously: "Then it is some war of words at the Museum. And for such poor stuff as

that a son can forget his duty to his father and mother!"

"But you, too, used to enjoy these conflicts of intellect," his daughter humbly remarked; but the old man broke in:

"Only because they help a miserable world to forget the torments of existence, and the hideous certainty of having been born only to die some horrible death. But what can you know of this?"

"By my mother's death-bed," replied the girl, "we, too, had a glimpse into the terrible mystery." And Alexander gravely added, "And since we last met, father, I may certainly account myself as one of the initiated."

"You have painted a dead body?" asked his father.

"Yes, father," replied the lad with a deep breath.

"I warned you," said Heron, in a tone of superior experience.

And then, as Melissa rearranged the folds of his blue robe, he said he should go for a walk. He sighed as he spoke, and his children knew whither he would go. It was to the grave to which Melissa had accompanied him that morning; and he would visit it alone, to meditate undisturbed on the wife he had lost.

## CHAPTER II.

THE brother and sister were left together. Melissa sighed deeply; but her brother went up to her, laid his arm round her shoulder, and said: "Poor child! you have indeed a hard time of it. Eighteen years old, and as pretty as you are, to be kept locked up as if in prison! No one would envy you, even if your fellow-captive and keeper were younger and less gloomy than your father is! But we know what it all means. His grief eats into his soul, and it does him as much good to storm and scold, as it does us to laugh."

"If only the world could know how kind his heart really is!" said the girl.

"He is not the same to his friends as to us," said Alexander; but Melissa shook her head, and said sadly: "He broke out yesterday against Apion, the dealer, and it was dreadful. For the fiftieth time he had waited supper for you two in vain, and in the twilight, when he had done work, his grief overcame him, and to see him weep is quite heart-breaking! The Syrian dealer came in and found him all tearful, and being so bold as to jest about it in his flippant way—"

"The old man would give him his answer, I know!" cried her brother with a hearty laugh. "He will not again be in a hurry to stir up a wounded lion."

"That is the very word," said Melissa, and her large eyes sparkled. "At the fight in the Circus, I could not help thinking of my father, when the huge king of the desert lay with a broken spear in his loins, whining loudly, and burying his maned head between his great paws. The gods are pitiless!"

"Indeed they are," replied the youth, with deep conviction; but his sister looked up at him in surprise.

"Do you say so, Alexander? Yes, indeed—you looked just now as I never saw you before. Has misfortune overtaken you too?"

"Misfortune?" he repeated, and he gently stroked her hair. "No, not exactly; and you know my woes sit lightly enough on me. The immortals have indeed shown me very plainly that it is their will sometimes to spoil the feast of life with a right bitter draught. But, like the moon itself, all it shines on is doomed to change—happily! Many things here below seem strangely ordered. Like ears and eyes, hands and feet, many things are by nature double, and misfortunes, as they say, commonly come in couples yoked like oxen."

"Then you have had some twofold blow?" asked Melissa, clasping her hands over her anxiously throbbing bosom.

"I, child! No, indeed. Nothing has befallen your father's younger son; and if I were a philosopher, like Philip, I should be moved to wonder why a man can only be wet when the rain falls on him, and yet can be so wretched when disaster falls on another. But do not look at me with such terror in your great eyes. I swear to you that, as a man and an artist, I never felt better, and so I ought properly to be in my usual frame of mind. But the

skeleton at life's festival has been shown to me. What sort of thing is that? It is an image—the image of a dead man which was carried round by the Egyptians, and is to this day by the Romans, to remind the feasters that they should fill every hour with enjoyment, since enjoyment is all too soon at an end. Such an image, child—”

“You are thinking of the dead girl—Seleukus's daughter—whose portrait you are painting?” asked Melissa.

Alexander nodded, sat down on the bench by his sister, and, taking up her needlework, exclaimed: “Give us some light, child. I want to see your pretty face. I want to be sure that Diodorus did not perjure himself when, at the ‘Crane,’ the other day, he swore that it had not its match in Alexandria. Besides, I hate the darkness.”

When Melissa returned with the lighted lamp, she found her brother, who was not wont to keep still, sitting in the place where she had left him. But he sprang up as she entered, and prevented her further greeting by exclaiming:

“Patience! patience! You shall be told all. Only I did not want to worry you on the day of the festival of the dead. And besides, to-morrow perhaps he will be in a better frame of mind, and next day—”

Melissa became urgent. “If Philip is ill—” she put in.

“Not exactly ill,” said he. “He has no fever, no ague-fit, no aches and pains. He is not in bed, and has no bitter draughts to swallow. Yet is he not well, any more than I, though but just now, in the dining-hall at the Elephant, I ate like a starving wolf, and could at this moment jump over this table. Shall I prove it?”

"No, no," said his sister, in growing distress. "But, if you love me, tell me at once and plainly—"

"At once and plainly," sighed the painter. "That, in any case, will not be easy. But I will do my best. You knew Korinna?"

"Seleukus's daughter?"

"She herself—the maiden from whose corpse I am painting her portrait."

"No. But you wanted—"

"I wanted to be brief, but I care even more to be understood; and if you have never seen with your own eyes, if you do not yourself know what a miracle of beauty the gods wrought when they molded that maiden, you are indeed justified in regarding me as a fool and Philip as a madman—which, thank the gods, he certainly is not yet."

"Then he too has seen the dead maiden?"

"No, no. And yet—perhaps. That at present remains a mystery. I hardly know what happened even to myself. I succeeded in controlling myself in my father's presence; but now, when it all rises up before me, before my very eyes, so distinct, so real, so tangible, now—by Sirius! Melissa, if you interrupt me again—"

"Begin again. I will be silent," she cried. "I can easily picture your Korinna as a divinely beautiful creature."

Alexander raised his hands to heaven, exclaiming with passionate vehemence: "Oh, how would I praise and glorify the gods, who formed that marvel of their art, and my mouth should be full of their grace and mercy, if they had but allowed the world to sun itself in the charm of that glorious creature, and to worship their everlasting beauty in her who was their image! But they have wantonly destroyed their own masterpiece, have crushed the

scarce-opened bud, have darkened the star ere it has risen! If a man had done it, Melissa, a man—what would his doom have been! If he—”

Here the youth hid his face in his hands in passionate emotion; but, feeling his sister's arm round his shoulder, he recovered himself, and went on more calmly: “Well, you heard that she was dead. She was of just your age; she is dead at eighteen, and her father commissioned me to paint her in death.—Pour me out some water; then I will proceed as coldly as a man crying the description of a runaway slave.” He drank a deep draught, and wandered restlessly up and down in front of his sister, while he told her all that had happened to him during the last few days.

The day before yesterday, at noon, he had left the inn where he had been carousing with friends, gay and careless, and had obeyed the call of Seleukus. Just before raising the knocker he had been singing cheerfully to himself. Never had he felt more fully content—the gayest of the gay. One of the first men in the town, and a connoisseur, had honored him with a fine commission, and the prospect of painting something dead had pleased him. His old master had often admired the exquisite delicacy of the flesh-tones of a recently deceased body. As his glance fell on the implements that his slave carried after him, he had drawn himself up with the proud feeling of having before him a noble task, to which he felt equal. Then the porter, a gray-bearded Gaul, had opened the door to him, and as he looked into his care-worn face and received from him a silent permission to step in, he had already become more serious.

He had heard marvels of the magnificence of the house that he now entered; and the lofty vestibule

into which he was admitted, the mosaic floor that he trod, the marble statues and high reliefs round the upper part of the walls, were well worth careful observation; yet he, whose eyes usually carried away so vivid an impression of what he had once seen that he could draw it from memory, gave no attention to any particular thing among the various objects worthy of admiration. For already in the anteroom a peculiar sensation had come over him. The large halls, which were filled with odors of ambergris and incense, were as still as the grave. And it seemed to him that even the sun, which had been shining brilliantly a few minutes before in a cloudless sky, had disappeared behind clouds, for a strange twilight, unlike anything he had ever seen, surrounded him. Then he perceived that it came in through the black velarium with which they had closed the open roof of the room through which he was passing.

In the anteroom a young freedman had hurried silently past him—had vanished like a shadow through the dusky rooms. His duty must have been to announce the artist's arrival to the mother of the dead girl; for, before Alexander had found time to feast his gaze on the luxurious mass of flowering plants that surrounded the fountain in the middle of the impluvium, a tall matron, in flowing mourning garments, came towards him—Korinna's mother.

Without lifting the black veil which enveloped her from head to foot, she speechlessly signed him to follow her. Till this moment not even a whisper had met his ear from any human lips in this house of death and mourning; and the stillness was so oppressive to the light-hearted young painter, that, merely to hear the sound of his own voice, he ex-



plained to the lady who he was and wherefore he had come. But the only answer was a dumb assenting-bow of the head.

He had not far to go with his stately guide; their walk ended in a spacious room. It had been made a perfect flower-garden with hundreds of magnificent plants; piles of garlands strewed the floor, and in the midst stood the couch on which lay the dead girl. In this hall, too, reigned the same gloomy twilight which had startled him in the vestibule.

The dim, shrouded form lying motionless on the couch before him, with a heavy wreath of lotus-flowers and white roses encircling it from head to foot, was the subject for his brush. He was to paint here, where he could scarcely distinguish one plant from another, or make out the form of the vases which stood round the bed of death. The white blossoms alone gleamed like pale lights in the gloom, and with a sister radiance something smooth and round which lay on the couch—the bare arm of the dead maiden.

His heart began to throb; the artist's love of his art had awaked within him; he had collected his wits, and explained to the matron that to paint in the darkness was impossible.

Again she bowed in reply, but at a signal two waiting women, who were squatting on the floor behind the couch, started up in the twilight, as if they had sprung from the earth, and approached their mistress.

A fresh shock chilled the painter's blood, for at the same moment the lady's voice was suddenly audible close to his ear, almost as deep as a man's but not unmelodious, ordering the girls to draw back the curtain as far as the painter should desire.

Now, he felt, the spell was broken; curiosity and eagerness took the place of reverence for death. He quietly gave his orders for the necessary arrangements, lent the women the help of his stronger arm, took out his painting implements, and then requested the matron to unveil the dead girl, that he might see from which side it would be best to take the portrait. But then again he was near losing his composure, for the lady raised her veil, and measured him with a glance as though he had asked something strange and audacious indeed.

Never had he met so piercing a glance from any woman's eyes; and yet they were red with weeping and full of tears. Bitter grief spoke in every line of her still youthful features, and their stern, majestic beauty was in keeping with the deep tones of her speech. Oh that he had been so happy as to see this woman in the bloom of youthful loveliness!

She did not heed his admiring surprise; before acceding to his demand, her regal form trembled from head to foot, and she sighed as she lifted the shroud from her daughter's face. Then, with a groan, she dropped on her knees by the couch and laid her cheek against that of the dead maiden. At last she rose, and murmured to the painter that if he were successful in his task her gratitude would be beyond expression.

"What more she said," Alexander went on, "I could but half understand, for she wept all the time, and I could not collect my thoughts. It was not till afterward that I learned from her waiting-woman—a Christian—that she meant to tell me that the relations and wailing women were to come to-morrow morning. I could paint on till nightfall, but no longer. I had been chosen for the task because Seleukus had heard from my old teacher, Bion, that

I should get a faithful likeness of the original more quickly than any one else. She may have said more, but I heard nothing; I only saw. For when the veil no longer hid that face from my gaze, I felt as though the gods had revealed a mystery to me which till now only the immortals had been permitted to know. Never was my soul so steeped in devotion, never had my heart beat in such solemn uplifting as at that moment. What I was gazing at and had to represent was a thing neither human nor divine; it was beauty itself—that beauty of which I have often dreamed in blissful rapture.

“And yet—do not misapprehend me—I never thought of bewailing the maiden, or grieving over her early death. She was but sleeping—I could fancy I watched one I loved in her slumbers. My heart beat high! Ay, child, and the work I did was pure joy, such joy as only the gods on Olympus know at their golden board. Every feature, every line was of such perfection as only the artist’s soul can conceive of, nay, even dream of. The ecstasy remained, but my unrest gave way to an indescribable and wordless bliss. I drew with the red chalk, and mixed the colors with the grinder, and all the while I could not feel the painful sense of painting a corpse. If she were slumbering, she had fallen asleep with bright images in her memory. I even fancied again and again that her lips moved her exquisitely chiseled mouth, and that a faint breath played with her abundant, waving, shining brown hair, as it does with yours.

“The Muse sped my hand and the portrait—Bion and the rest will praise it, I think, though it is no more like the unapproachable original than that lamp is like the evening star yonder.”

“And shall we be allowed to see it?” asked Me-

lissa, who had been listening breathlessly to her brother's narrative.

The words seemed to have snatched the artist from a dream. He had to pause and consider where he was and to whom he was speaking. He hastily pushed the curling hair off his damp brow, and said: "I do not understand. What is it you ask?"

"I only asked whether we should be allowed to see the portrait," she answered timidly. "I was wrong to interrupt you. But how hot your head is! Drink again before you go on. Had you really finished by sundown?"

Alexander shook his head, drank, and then went on more calmly: "No, no! It is a pity you spoke. In fancy I was painting her still. There is the moon rising already. I must make haste. I have told you all this for Philip's sake, not for my own."

"I will not interrupt you again, I assure you," said Melissa.

"Well, well," said her brother. "There is not much that is pleasant left to tell. Where was I?"

"Painting, so long as it was light—"

"To be sure—I remember. It began to grow dark. Then lamps were brought in, large ones, and as many as I wished for. Just before sunset Seleukus, Korinna's father, came in to look upon his daughter once more. He bore his grief with dignified composure; yet by his child's bier he found it hard to be calm. But you can imagine all that. He invited me to eat, and the food they brought might have tempted a full man to excess, but I could only swallow a few mouthfuls. Berenike—the mother—did not even moisten her lips, but Seleukus did duty for us both, and this I could see displeased his wife. During supper the merchant made many inquiries about me and my father; for

he had heard Philip's praises from his brother Theophilus, the high-priest. I learned from him that Korinna had caught her sickness from a slave girl she had nursed, and had died of the fever in three days. But while I sat listening to him, as he talked and ate, I could not keep my eyes off his wife who reclined opposite to me silent and motionless, for the gods had created Korinna in her very image. The lady Berenike's eyes indeed sparkle with a lurid, I might almost say an alarming, fire, but they are shaped like Korinna's. I said so, and asked whether they were of the same color; I wanted to know for my portrait. On this Seleukus referred me to a picture painted by old Sosibius, who has lately gone to Rome to work in Cæsar's new baths. He last year painted the wall of a room in the merchant's country house at Kanopus. In the center of the picture stands Galatea, and I know it now to be a good and true likeness.

"The picture I finished that evening is to be placed at the head of the young girl's sarcophagus; but I am to keep it two days longer, to reproduce a second likeness more at my leisure, with the help of the Galatea, which is to remain in Seleukus's town house.

"Then he left me alone with his wife.

"What a delightful commission! I set to work with renewed pleasure, and more composure than at first. I had no need to hurry, for the first picture is to be hidden in the tomb, and I could give all my care to the second. Besides, Korinna's features were indelibly impressed on my eye.

"I generally can not paint at all by lamp-light; but this time I found no difficulty, and I soon *recovered that blissful, solemn mood which I had felt in the presence of the dead.* Only now and then

it was clouded by a sigh, or a faint moan from Berenike: 'Gone, gone! There is no comfort—none, none!'

"And what could I answer? When did Death ever give back what he has snatched away?"

"'I can not even picture her as she was,' she murmured sadly to herself—but this I might remedy by the help of my art, so I painted on with increasing zeal; and at last her lamentations ceased to trouble me, for she fell asleep, and her handsome head sank on her breast. The watchers, too, had dropped asleep, and only their deep breathing broke the stillness.

"Suddenly it flashed upon me that I was alone with Korinna, and the feeling grew stronger and stronger; I fancied her lovely lips had moved, that a smile gently parted them, inviting me to kiss them. As often as I looked at them—and they bewitched me—I saw and felt the same, and at last every impulse within me drove me toward her, and I could no longer resist: my lips pressed hers in a kiss!"

Melissa softly sighed, but the artist did not hear; he went on: "And in that kiss I became hers; she took the heart and soul of me. I can no longer escape from her; awake or asleep, her image is before my eyes, and my spirit is in her power."

Again he drank, emptying the cup at one deep gulp. Then he went on: "So be it! Who sees a god, they say, must die. And it is well, for he has known something more glorious than other men. Our brother Philip, too, lives with his heart in bonds to that one alone, unless a demon has cheated his senses. I am troubled about him, and you must help me."

*He sprang up, pacing the room again with long*

strides, but his sister clung to his arm and besought him to shake off the bewitching vision. How earnest was her prayer, what eager tenderness rang in her every word, as she entreated him to tell her when and where her elder brother, too, had met the daughter of Seleukus!

The artist's soft heart was easily moved. Stroking the hair of the loving creature at his side—so helpful as a rule, but now bewildered—he tried to calm her by affecting a lighter mood than he really felt, assuring her that he should soon recover his usual good spirits. She knew full well, he said, that his living loves changed in frequent succession, and it would be strange indeed if a dead one could bind him any longer. And his adventure, so far as it concerned the house of Seleukus, ended with that kiss; for the lady Berenike had presently waked, and urged him to finish the portrait at his own house.

Next morning he had completed it with the help of the Galatea in the villa at Kanopus, and he had heard a great deal about the dead maiden. A young woman who was left in charge of the villa had supplied him with whatever he needed. Her pretty face was swollen with weeping, and it was in a voice choked with tears that she had told him that her husband, who was a centurion in Cæsar's pretorian guard, would arrive to-morrow or next day at Alexandria, with his imperial master. She had not seen him for a long time, and had an infant to show him which he had not yet seen; and yet she could not be glad, for her young mistress's death had extinguished all her joy.

"The affection which breathed in every word of the centurion's wife," Alexander said, "helped me in my work. I could be satisfied with the result.

The picture is so successful that I finished that for Seleukus in all confidence, and for the sarcophagus I will copy it as well or as ill as time will allow. It will hardly be seen in the half-dark tomb, and how few will ever go to see it! None but a Seleukus can afford to employ so costly a brush as your brother's is—thank the Muses! But the second portrait is quite another thing, for that may chance to be hung next a picture by Apelles; and it must restore to the parents so much of their lost child as it lies in my power to give them. So, on my way, I made up my mind to begin the copy at once by lamp-light, for it must be ready by to-morrow night at latest.

"I hurried to my work-room, and my slave placed the picture on an easel, while I welcomed my brother Philip who had come to see me, and who had lighted a lamp, and of course had brought a book. He was so absorbed in it that he did not observe that I had come in till I addressed him. Then I told him whence I came and what had happened, and he thought it all very strange and interesting.

"He was as usual rather hurried and hesitating, not quite clear, but understanding it all. Then he began telling me something about a philosopher who has just come to the front, a porter by trade, from whom he had heard sundry wonders, and it was not till Syrus brought me in a supper of oysters—for I could still eat nothing more solid—that he asked to see the portrait.

"I pointed to the easel, and watched him; for the harder he is to please, the more I value his opinion. This time I felt confident of praise, or even of some admiration, if only for the beauty of the model.



"He threw off the veil from the picture with a hasty movement, but, instead of gazing at it calmly, as he is wont, and snapping out his sharp criticisms, he staggered backward, as though the noonday sun had dazzled his sight. Then, bending forward, he stared at the painting, panting as he might after racing for a wager. He stood in perfect silence, for I know not how long, as though it were Medusa he was gazing on, and when at last he clasped his hand to his brow, I called him by name. He made no reply, but an impatient 'Leave me alone!' and then he still gazed at the face as though to devour it with his eyes, and without a sound.

"I did not disturb him; for, thought I, he too is bewitched by the exquisite beauty of those virgin features. So we were both silent, till he asked, in a choked voice: 'And did you paint that? Is that, do you say, the daughter that Seleukus has just lost?'

"Of course I said 'Yes'; but then he turned on me in a rage, and reproached me bitterly for deceiving and cheating him, and jesting with things that to him were sacred, though I might think them a subject for sport.

"I assured him that my answer was as earnest as it was accurate, and that every word of my story was true.

"This only made him more furious. I, too, began to get angry, and as he, evidently deeply agitated, still persisted in saying that my picture could not have been painted from the dead Korinna, I swore to him solemnly, with the most sacred oath I could think of, that it was really so.

"On this he declared to me in words so tender and touching as I never before heard from his lips, *that if I were deceiving him his peace of mind would*

be forever destroyed—nay, that he feared for his reason ; and when I had repeatedly assured him, by the memory of our departed mother, that I had never dreamed of playing a trick upon him, he shook his head, grasped his brow, and turned to leave the room without another word.”

“And you let him go?” cried Melissa, in anxious alarm.

“Certainly not,” replied the painter. “On the contrary, I stood in his way, and asked him whether he had known Korinna, and what all this might mean. But he would make no reply, and tried to pass me and get away. It must have been a strange scene, for we two big men struggled as if we were at a wrestling-match. I got him down with one hand behind his knees, and so he had to remain ; and when I had promised to let him go, he confessed that he had seen Korinna at the house of her uncle, the high-priest, without knowing who she was or even speaking a word to her. And he, who usually flees from every creature wearing a woman’s robe, had never forgotten that maiden and her noble beauty ; and, though he did not say so, it was obvious, from every word, that he was madly in love. Her eyes had followed him wherever he went, and this he deemed a great misfortune, for it had disturbed his power of thought. A month since he went across Lake Mareotis to Polybius to visit Andreas, and while, on his return, he was standing on the shore, he saw her again, with an old man in white robes. But the last time he saw her was on the morning of the very day when all this happened ; and if he is to be believed, he not only saw her but touched her hand. That, again, was by the lake ; she was just stepping out of the ferry-boat. The obolus she had ready to pay the oarsman dropped on the ground,

and Philip picked it up and returned it to her. Then his fingers touched hers. He could feel it still, he declared, and yet she had then ceased to walk among the living.

"Then it was my turn to doubt his word; but he maintained that his story was true in every detail; he would hear nothing said about some one resembling her, or anything of the kind, and spoke of daimons showing him false visions, to cheat him and hinder him from working out his investigations of the real nature of things to a successful issue. But this is in direct antagonism to his views of daimons; and when at last he rushed out of the house, he looked like one possessed of evil spirits.

"I hurried after him, but he disappeared down a dark alley. Then I had enough to do to finish my copy, and yesterday I carried it home to Seleukus.

"Then I had time to look for Philip, but I could hear nothing of him, either in his own lodgings or at the Museum. To-day I have been hunting for him since early in the morning. I even forgot to lay any flowers on my mother's grave, as usual on the day of the Nekysia, because I was thinking only of him. But he no doubt is gone to the city of the dead; for, on my way hither, as I was ordering a garland in the flower-market, pretty little Doxion showed me two beauties which she had woven for him, and which he is presently to fetch. So he must now be in the Nekropolis; and I know for whom he intends the second; for the door-keeper at Seleukus's house told me that a man, who said he was my brother, had twice called, and had eagerly inquired whether my picture had yet been attached to *Korinna's sarcophagus*. The old man told him it had *not, because, of course, the embalming could not be*

complete as yet. But the picture was to be displayed to-day, as being the feast of the dead, in the hall of the embalmers. That was the plan, I know. So, now, child, set your wise little woman's head to work, and devise something by which he may be brought to his senses, and released from these crazy imaginings."

"The first thing to be done," Melissa exclaimed, "is to follow him and talk to him.—Wait a moment; I must speak a word to the slaves. My father's night-draught can be mixed in a minute. He might perhaps return home before us, and I must leave his couch— I will be with you in a minute."

### CHAPTER III.

THE brother and sister had walked some distance. The roads were full of people, and the nearer they came to the Nekropolis the denser was the throng.

As they skirted the town walls they took counsel together.

Being perfectly agreed that the girl who had touched Philip's hand could certainly be no daimon who had assumed Korinna's form, they were inclined to accept the view that a strong resemblance had deceived their brother. They finally decided that Alexander should try to discover the maiden who so strangely resembled the dead; and the artist was ready for the task, for he could only work when his heart was light, and had never felt such a weight on it before. The hope of meeting with a living creature who resembled that fair dead maiden, combined with his wish to rescue his brother from the disorder of mind which threatened him; and Melissa perceived with glad surprise how quickly this new object in life restored the youth's happy temper.

It was she who spoke most, and Alexander, whom nothing escaped that had any form of beauty, feasted his ear on the pearly ring of her voice. "*And her face is to match,*" thought he as they *went on in the darkness*; "and may the Charites

who have endowed her with every charm, forgive my father for burying her as he does his gold."

It was not in his nature to keep anything that stirred him deeply to himself, when he was in the society of another, so he murmured to his sister: "It is just as well that the Macedonian youths of this city should not be able to see what a jewel our old man's house contains.—Look how brightly Selene shines on us, and how gloriously the stars burn! Nowhere do the heavens blaze more brilliantly than here. As soon as we come out of the shadow that the great walls cast on the road we shall be in broad light. There is the Serapeum rising out of the darkness. They are rehearsing the great illumination which is to dazzle the eyes of Cæsar when he comes. But they must show, too, that to-night, at least, the gods of the nether world and death are all awake. You can never have been in the Nekropolis at so late an hour before."

"How should I?" replied the girl. And he expressed the pleasure that it gave him to be able to show her for the first time the wonderful night scene of such a festival. And when he heard the deep-drawn "Ah!" with which she hailed the sight of the greatest temple of all, blazing in the midst of the darkness with tar-pans, torches, and lamps innumerable, he replied with as much pride and satisfaction as though she owed the display to him, "Ay, what do you think of that?"

Above the huge stone edifice which was thus lighted up, the dome of the Serapeum rose high into the air, its summit appearing to touch the sky. Never had the gigantic structure seemed so beautiful to the girl, who had only seen it by daylight; for under the illumination, arranged by a master-hand, *every line stood out more clearly than in the sun-*

light; and in the presence of this wonderful sight Melissa's impressionable young soul forgot the trouble that had weighed on it, and her heart beat higher.

Her lonely life with her father had hitherto fully satisfied her, and she had never yet dreamed of anything better in the future than a quiet and modest existence, caring for him and her brothers; but now she thankfully experienced the pleasure of seeing for once something really grand and fine, and rejoiced at having escaped for a while from the monotony of each day and hour.

Once, too, she had been with her brothers and Diodoros, Alexander's greatest friend, to see a wild-beast fight, followed by a combat of gladiators; but she had come home frightened and sorrowful, for what she had seen had horrified more than it had interested her. Some of the killed and tortured beings haunted her mind; and, besides, sitting in the lowest and best seats belonging to Diodoros's wealthy father, she had been stared at so boldly and defiantly whenever she raised her eyes, by a young gallant opposite, that she had felt vexed and insulted; nay, had wished above all things to get home as soon as possible. And yet she had loved Diodoros from her childhood, and she would have enjoyed sitting quietly by his side more than looking on at the show.

But on this occasion her curiosity was gratified, and the hope of being able to help one who was dear to her filled her with quiet gladness. It was a comfort to her, too, to find herself once more by her mother's grave with Alexander, who was her especial friend. She could never come here often enough, and the blessing which emanated from it—*of that she was convinced*—must surely fall on her

brother also, and avert from him all that grieved his heart.

As they walked on between the Serapeum on one hand, towering high above all else, and the Stadium on the other, the throng was dense; on the bridge over the canal it was difficult to make any progress. Now, as the full moon rose, the sacrifices and games in honor of the gods of the under world were beginning, and now the workshops and factories had emptied themselves into the streets already astir for the festival of the dead, so every moment the road became more crowded.

Such a tumult was generally odious to her retiring nature; but to-night she felt herself merely one drop in the great, flowing river, of which every other drop felt the same impulse which was carrying her forward to her destination. The desire to show the dead that they were not forgotten, that their favor was courted and hoped for, animated men and women, old and young alike.

There were few indeed who had not a wreath or a posy in their hands, or carried behind them by a slave. In front of the brother and sister was a large family of children. A black nurse carried the youngest on her shoulder, and an ass bore a basket in which were flowers for the tomb, with a wine-flask and eatables. A memorial banquet was to be held at the grave of their ancestors; and the little one, whose golden head rose above the black, woolly poll of the negress, nodded gayly in response to Melissa's smiles. The children were enchanted at the prospect of a meal at such an unusual hour, and their parents rejoiced in them and in the solemn pleasure they anticipated.

Many a one in this night of remembrance only cared to recall the happy hours spent in the society



of the beloved dead; others hoped to leave their grief and pain behind them, and find fresh courage and contentment in the City of the Dead; for to-night the gates of the nether world stood open, and now, if ever, the gods that reigned there would accept the offerings and hear the prayers of the devout.

Those lean Egyptians, who pushed past in silence and hanging their heads, were no doubt bent on carrying offerings to Osiris and Anubis—for the festival of the gods of death and resurrection coincided with the Nekysia—and on winning their favors by magical formulas and spells.

Everything was plainly visible, for the desert tract of the Nekropolis, where at this hour utter darkness and silence usually reigned, was brightly lighted up. Still, the blaze failed to banish entirely the thrill of fear which pervaded the spot at night; for the unwonted glare dazzled and bewildered the bats and night-birds, and they fluttered about over the heads of the intruders in dark, ghostly flight. Many a one believed them to be the unresting souls of condemned sinners, and looked up at them with awe.

Melissa drew her veil closer and clung more tightly to her brother, for a sound of singing and wild cries, which she had heard behind her for some time, was now coming closer. They were no longer treading the paved street, but the hard-beaten soil of the desert. The crush was over, for here the crowd could spread abroad; but the uproarious troop, which she did not even dare to look at, came rushing past quite close to them. They were Greeks, of all ages and of both sexes. The men flourished torches, and were shouting a song with unbridled *vehemence*; the women, wearing garlands, kept up

with them. What they carried in the baskets on their heads could not be seen, nor did Alexander know; for so many religious brotherhoods and mystic societies existed here that it was impossible to guess to which this noisy troop might belong.

The pair had presently overtaken a little train of white-robed men moving forward at a solemn pace, whom the painter recognized as the philosophical and religious fraternity of the Neo-Pythagoreans, when a small knot of men and women in the greatest excitement came rushing past as if they were mad. The men wore the loose red caps of their Phrygian land; the women carried bowls full of fruits. Some beat small drums, others clanged cymbals, and each hauled his neighbor along with deafening cries, faster and faster, till the dust hid them from sight and a new din drowned the last, for the votaries of Dionysos were already close upon them, and vied with the Phrygians in uproariousness. But this wild troop remained behind; for one of the light-colored oxen, covered with decorations, which was being driven in the procession by a party of men and boys, to be presently sacrificed, had broken away, maddened by the lights and the shouting, and had to be caught and led again.

At last they reached the graveyard. But even now they could not make their way to the long row of houses where the embalmers dwelt, for an impenetrable mass of human beings stood pent up in front of them, and Melissa begged her brother to give her a moment's breathing space.

All she had seen and heard on the way had excited her greatly; but she had scarcely for a moment forgotten what it was that had brought her out so late, who it was that she sought, or that it would *need her utmost* endeavor to free him from

the delusion that had fooled him. In this dense throng and deafening tumult it was scarcely possible to recover that collected calm which she had found in the morning at her mother's tomb. In that, doubt had had no part, and the delightful feeling of freedom which had shone on her soul, now shrank deep into the shade before a growing curiosity and the longing for her usual repose.

If her father were to find her here! When she saw a tall figure resembling his cross the torchlight, all clouded as it was by the dust, she drew her brother away behind the stall of a seller of drinks and other refreshments. The father, at any rate, must be spared the distress she felt about Philip, who was his favorite. Besides, she knew full well that, if he met her here, he would at once take her home.

The question now was where Philip might be found.

They were standing close to the booths where itinerant dealers sold food and liquors of every description, flowers and wreaths, amulets and papyrus-leaves, with strange charms written on them to secure health for the living and salvation for the souls of the dead. An astróloger, who foretold the course of a man's life from the position of the planets, had erected a high platform with large tables displayed to view, and the instrument wherewith he aimed at the stars as it were with a bow; and his Syrian slave, accompanying himself on a gayly-painted drum, proclaimed his master's powers. There were closed tents in which magical remedies were to be obtained, though their open sale was forbidden by the authorities, from love-philters to *the wondrous fluid* which, if rightly applied, would *turn lead, copper, or silver to gold*. Here, old wom-

en invited the passer-by to try Thracian and other spells; there, magicians stalked to and fro in painted caps and flowing, gaudy robes, most of them calling themselves priests of some god of the abyss. Men of every race and tongue that dwelt in the north of Africa, or on the shores of the Mediterranean, were packed in a noisy throng.

The greatest press was behind the houses of the men who buried the dead. Here sacrifices were offered on the altars of Serapis, Isis, and Anubis; here the sacred sistrum of Isis might be kissed; here hundreds of priests performed solemn ceremonies, and half of those who came hither for the festival of the dead collected about them. The mysteries were also performed here, beginning before midnight; and a dramatic representation might be seen of the woes of Isis, and the resurrection of her husband Osiris. But neither here, nor at the stalls, nor among the graves, where many families were feasting by torchlight and pouring libations in the sand for the souls of the dead, did Alexander expect to find his brother. Nor would Philip be attending the mysterious solemnities of any of the fraternities. He had witnessed them often enough with his friend Diodoros, who never missed the procession to Eleusis, because, as he declared, the mysteries of Demeter alone could assure a man of the immortality of the soul. The wild ceremonies of the Syrians, who maimed themselves in their mad ecstasy, repelled him as being coarse and barbarous.

As she made her way through this medley of cults, this worship of gods so different that they were in some cases hostile, but more often merged into each other, Melissa wondered to which she ought to *turn in her present need*. Her mother had

best loved to sacrifice to Serapis and Isis. But since, in her last sickness, Melissa had offered everything she possessed to these divinities of healing, and all in vain, and since she had heard things in the Serapeum itself which even now brought a blush to her cheek, she had turned away from the great god of the Alexandrians. Though he who had offended her by such base proposals was but a priest of the lower grade—and indeed, though she knew it not, was since dead—she feared meeting him again, and had avoided the sanctuary where he officiated.

She was a thorough Alexandrian, and had been accustomed from childhood to listen to the philosophical disputations of the men about her. So she perfectly understood her brother Philip, the skeptic, when he said that he by no means denied the existence of the immortals, but that, on the other hand, he could not believe in it; that thought brought him no conviction; that man, in short, could be sure of nothing, and so could know nothing whatever of the divinity. He had even denied, on logical grounds, the goodness and omnipotence of the gods, the wisdom and fitness of the ordering of the universe, and Melissa was proud of her brother's acumen; but what appeals to the brain only, and not to the heart, can not move a woman to anything great—least of all to a decisive change of life or feeling. So the girl had remained constant to her mother's faith in some mighty powers outside herself, which guided the life of Nature and of human beings. Only she did not feel that she had found the true god, either in Serapis or Isis, and so she had sought others. Thus she had formulated a worship of ancestors, which, as she had learned from the slave-woman of her friend Ino, was not unfamiliar to the Egyptians.

In Alexandria there were altars to every god, and worship in every form. Hers, however, was not among them, for the genius of her creed was the enfranchised soul of her mother, who had cast off the burden of this perishable body. Nothing had ever come from her that was not good and lovely; and she knew that if her mother were permitted, even in some other than human form, she would never cease to watch over her with tender care.

And those initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, as Diodoros had told her, desired the immortality of the soul, to the end that they might continue to participate in the life of those whom they had left behind. What was it that brought such multitudes at this time out to the Nekropolis, with their hands full of offerings, but the consciousness of their nearness to the dead, and of being cared for by them so long as they were not forgotten? And even if the glorified spirit of her mother were not permitted to hear her prayers, she need not therefore cease to turn to her; for it comforted her unspeakably to be with her in spirit, and to confide to her all that moved her soul. And so her mother's tomb had become her favorite place of rest. Here, if anywhere, she now hoped once more to find comfort, some happy suggestion, and perhaps some definite assistance.

She begged Alexander to take her thither, and he consented, though he was of opinion that Philip would be found in the mortuary chamber, in the presence of Korinna's portrait.

It was not easy to force their way through the thousands who had come out to the great show this night; however, most of the visitors were attracted by the mysteries far away from the Macedonian *burial-ground*, and there was little to disturb

the silence near the fine marble monument which Alexander, to gratify his father, had erected with his first large earnings. It was hung with various garlands, and Melissa, before she prayed and anointed the stone, examined them with eye and hand.

Those which she and her father had placed there she recognized at once. That humble garland of reeds with two lotus-flowers was the gift of their old slave Argutis and his wife Dido. This beautiful wreath of choice flowers had come from the garden of a neighbor who had loved her mother well; and that splendid basketful of lovely roses, which had not been there this morning, had been placed here by Andreas, steward to the father of her young friend Diodoros, although he was of the Christian sect. And these were all. Philip had not been here then, though it was now past midnight.

For the first time in his life he had let this day pass by without a thought for their dead. How bitterly this grieved Melissa, and even added to her anxiety for him!

It was with a heavy heart that she and Alexander anointed the tombstone; and while Melissa uplifted her hands in prayer, the painter stood in silence, his eyes fixed on the ground. But no sooner had she let them fall, than he exclaimed:

"He is here, I am sure, and in the house of the embalmers. That he ordered two wreaths is perfectly certain; and if he meant one for Korinna's picture, he surely intended the other for our mother. If he has offered both to the young girl—"

"No, no!" Melissa put in. "He will bring his gift. Let us wait here a little while, and do you, too, pray to the manes of our mother. Do it to please me."

*But her brother interrupted her eagerly: "I*

think of her wherever I may be; for those we truly love always live for us. Not a day passes, nor if I come in sober, not a night, when I do not see her dear face, either waking or dreaming. Of all things sacred, the thought of her is the highest; and if she had been raised to divine honors like the dead Cæsars who have brought so many curses on the world—”

“Hush—don’t speak so loud!” said Melissa, seriously, for men were moving to and fro among the tombs, and Roman guards kept watch over the populace.

But the rash youth went on in the same tone:

“I would worship her gladly, though I have forgotten how to pray. For who can tell here—unless he follows the herd and worships Serapis—who can tell to which god of them all he shall turn when he happens to be at his wits’ end? While my mother lived, I, like you, could gladly worship and sacrifice to the immortals; but Philip has spoiled me for all that. As to the divine Cæsars, every one thinks as I do. My mother would sooner have entered a pest-house than the banqueting-hall where they feast, on Olympus. Caracalla among the gods! Why, Father Zeus cast his son Hephaistos on earth from the height of Olympus, and only broke his leg; but our Cæsar accomplished a more powerful throw, for he cast his brother through the earth into the nether world—an imperial thrust—and not merely lamed him but killed him.”

“Well done!” said a deep voice, interrupting the young artist. “Is that you, Alexander? Hear what new titles to fame Heron’s son can find for the imperial guest who is to arrive to-morrow.”

“Pray hush!” Melissa besought him, looking up at the bearded man who had laid his arm on Alex-



ander's shoulder. It was Glaukias the sculptor, her father's tenant ; for his work-room stood on the plot of ground by the garden of Hermes, which the gem-cutter had inherited from his father-in-law.

The man's bold, manly features were flushed with wine and revelry ; his twinkling eyes sparkled, and the ivy-leaves still clinging to his curly hair showed that he had been one in the Dionysiac revellers ; but the Greek blood which ran in his veins preserved his grace even in drunkenness. He bowed gayly to the young girl, and exclaimed to his companions :

"The youngest pearl in Alexandria's crown of beauties !" while Bion, Alexander's now gray-haired master, clapped the youth on the arm, and added : "Yes, indeed, see what the little thing has grown ! —Do you remember, pretty one, how you once—how many years ago, I wonder ?—spotted your little white garments all over with red dots ! I can see you now, your tiny finger plunged into the pot of paint, and then carefully printing off the round pattern all over the white linen. Why, the little painter has become a Hebe, a Charis, or, better still, a sweetly dreaming Psyche."

"Ay, ay !" said Glaukias again. "My worthy landlord has a charming model. He has not far to seek for a head for his best gems. His son, a Helios, or the great Macedonian whose name he bears ; his daughter—you are right, Bion—the maid beloved of Eros. Now, if you can make verses, my young friend of the Muses, give us an epigram in a line or two which we may bear in mind as a compliment to our imperial visitor."

"But not here—not in the burial-ground," Melissa urged once more.

Among Glaukias's companions was Argeios, a

vain and handsome young poet, with scented locks betraying him from afar, who was fain to display the promptness of his poetical powers; and, even while the elder artist was speaking, he had run Alexander's satirical remarks into the mold of rhythm. Not to save his life could he have suppressed the hastily conceived distich, or have let slip such a justifiable claim to applause. So, without heeding Melissa's remonstrance, he flung his sky-blue mantle about him in fresh folds, and declaimed with comical emphasis:

"Down to earth did the god cast his son: but with mightier hand  
Through it, to Hades, Cæsar flung his brother the dwarf."

The versifier was rewarded by a shout of laughter, and, spurred by the approval of his friends, he declared he had hit on the mode to which to sing his lines, as he did in a fine, full voice.

But there was another poet, Mentor, also of the party, and as he could not be happy under his rival's triumph, he exclaimed: "The great dyer—for you know he uses blood instead of the Tyrian shell—has nothing of Father Zeus about him that I can see, but far more of the great Alexander, whose mausoleum he is to visit to-morrow. And if you would like to know wherein the son of Severus resembles the giant of Macedon, you shall hear."

He thrummed his thyrsus as though he struck the strings of a lyre, and, having ended the dumb prelude, he sang:

"Wherein hath the knave Caracalla outdone Alexander?  
He killed a brother, the hero a friend, in his rage."

These lines, however, met with no applause; for they were not so lightly improvised as the former distich, and it was clumsy and tasteless, as well as

dangerous thus to name, in connection with such a jest, the potentate at whom it was aimed. And the fears of the jovial party were only too well founded, for a tall, lean Egyptian suddenly stood among the Greeks as if he had sprung from the earth. They were sobered at once, and, like a swarm of pigeons on which a hawk swoops down, they dispersed in all directions.

Melissa beckoned to her brother to follow her; but the Egyptian intruder snatched the mantle, quick as lightning, from Alexander's shoulders, and ran off with it to the nearest pine-torch. The young man hurried after the thief, as he supposed him to be, but there the spy flung the cloak back to him, saying, in a tone of command, though not loud, for there were still many persons among the graves:

"Hands off, son of Heron, unless you want me to call the watch! I have seen your face by the light, and that is enough for this time. Now we know each other, and we shall meet again in another place!"

With these words he vanished in the darkness, and Melissa asked, in great alarm:

"In the name of all the gods, who was that?"

"Some rascally carpenter, or scribe, probably, who is in the service of the night-watch as a spy. At least those sort of folks are often built askew, as that scoundrel was," replied Alexander, lightly.

But he knew the man only too well. It was Zminis, the chief of the spies to the night patrol; a man who was particularly inimical to Heron, and whose hatred included the son, by whom he had been befooled and misled in more than one wild ploy with his boon companions. This spy, whose cruelty and cunning were universally feared, might

do him a serious mischief, and he therefore did not tell his sister, to whom the name of Zminis was well known, who the listener was.

He cut short all further questioning by desiring her to come at once to the mortuary hall.

"And if we do not find him there," she said, "let us go home at once; I am so frightened."

"Yes, yes," said her brother, vaguely. "If only we could meet some one you could join."

"No, we will keep together," replied Melissa, decisively; and simply assenting, with a brief "All right," the painter drew her arm through his, and they made their way through the now thinning crowd.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE houses of the embalmers, which earlier in the evening had shone brightly out of the darkness, now made a less splendid display. The dust kicked up by the crowd dimmed the few lamps and torches which had not by this time burned out or been extinguished, and an oppressive atmosphere of balsamic resin and spices met the brother and sister on the very threshold. The vast hall which they now entered was one of a long row of buildings of unburned bricks; but the Greeks insisted on some ornamentation of the simplest structure, if it served a public purpose, and the embalming-houses had a colonnade along their front, and their walls were covered with stucco, painted in gaudy colors, here in the Egyptian and there in the Greek taste. There were scenes from the Egyptian realm of the dead, and others from the Hellenic myths; for the painters had been enjoined to satisfy the requirements and views of visitors of every race. The chief attraction, however, this night was within; for the men whose duties were exercised on the dead had displayed the finest and best of what they had to offer to their customers.

The ancient Greek practice of burning the dead had died out under the Antonines. Of old, the objects used to deck the pyre had also been on show *here*; now there was nothing to be seen but what *related to interment or entombment*.

Side by side with the marble sarcophagus, or those of coarser stone, were wooden coffins and mummy-cases, with a place at the head for the portrait of the deceased. Vases and jars of every kind, amulets of various forms, spices and balsams in vials and boxes, little images in burned clay of the gods and of men, of which none but the Egyptians knew the allegorical meaning, stood in long rows on low wooden shelves. On the higher shelves were mummy bands and shrouds, some coarse, others of the very finest texture, wigs for the bald heads of shaven corpses, or woolen fillets, and simply or elaborately embroidered ribbons for the Greek dead.

Nothing was lacking of the various things in use for decking the corpse of an Alexandrian, whatever his race or faith.

Some mummy-cases, too, were there, ready to be packed off to other towns. The most costly were covered with fine red linen, wound about with strings of beads and gold ornaments, and with the name of the dead painted on the upper side. In a long, narrow room apart hung the portraits, waiting to be attached to the upper end of the mummy-cases of those lately deceased, and still in the hands of embalmers. Here, too, most of the lamps were out, and the upper end of the room was already dark. Only in the middle, where the best pictures were on show, the lights had been renewed.

The portraits were painted on thin panels of sycamore or of cypress, and in most of them the execution betrayed that their destiny was to be hidden in the gloom of a tomb.

Alexander's portrait of Korinna was in the middle of the gallery, in a good light, and stood out from the paintings on each side of it as a genuine

emerald amid green glass. It was constantly surrounded by a crowd of the curious and connoisseurs. They pointed out the beautiful work to each other; but, though most of them acknowledged the skill of the master who had painted it, many ascribed its superiority to the magical charm of the model. One could see in those wonderfully harmonious features that Aristotle was right when he discerned beauty in order and proportion; while another declared that he found there the evidence of Plato's doctrine of the identity of the good and the beautiful—for this face was so lovely because it was the mirror of a soul which had been disembodied in the plenitude of maiden purity and virtue, unjarred by any discord; and this gave rise to a vehement discussion as to the essential nature of beauty and of virtue.

Others longed to know more about the early-dead original of this enchanting portrait.

Korinna's wealthy father and his brothers were among the best-known men of the city. The elder, Timotheus, was high-priest of the Temple of Serapis; and Zeno, the younger, had set the whole world talking when he, who in his youth had been notoriously dissipated, had retired from any concern in the corn-trade carried on by his family, the greatest business of the kind in the world, perhaps, and—for this was an open secret—had been baptized.

The body of the maiden, when embalmed and graced with her portrait, was to be transported to the family tomb in the district of Arsinoë, where they had large possessions, and the gossip of the embalmer was eagerly swallowed as he expatiated on the splendor with which her liberal father proposed to escort her thither.

Alexander and Melissa had entered the portrait-gallery before the beginning of this narrative, and listened to it, standing behind several rows of gazers who were between them and the portrait.

As the speaker ceased, the little crowd broke up, and when Melissa could at last see her brother's work at her ease, she stood speechless for some time; and then she turned to the artist, and exclaimed, from the depths of her heart, "Beauty is perhaps the noblest thing in the world!"

"It is," replied Alexander, with perfect assurance. And he, bewitched once more by the spell which had held him by Korinna's couch, gazed into the dark eyes in his own picture, whose living glance his had never met, and which he nevertheless had faithfully reproduced, giving them a look of the longing of a pure soul for all that is lovely and worthy.

Melissa, an artist's daughter, as she looked at this portrait, understood what it was that had so deeply stirred her brother while he painted it; but this was not the place to tell him so. She soon tore herself away, to look about for Philip once more and then to be taken home.

Alexander, too, was seeking Philip; but, sharp as the artist's eyes were, Melissa's seemed to be keener, for, just as they were giving it up and turning to go, she pointed to a dark corner and said softly, "There he is."

And there, in fact, her brother was, sitting with two men, one very tall and the other a little man, his brow resting on his hand in the deep shadow of a sarcophagus, between the wall and a mummy-case set on end, which till now had hidden him from Alexander and Melissa.

Who could the man be who had kept the young



philosopher, somewhat inaccessible in his pride of learning, so long in talk in that half-dark corner? He was not one of the learned society at the Museum; Alexander knew them all. Besides, he was not dressed like them, in the Greek fashion, but in the flowing robe of a Magian. And the stranger was a man of consequence, for he wore his splendid garment with a superior air, and as Alexander approached him he remembered having somewhere seen this tall, bearded figure, with the powerful head garnished with flowing and carefully oiled black curls. Such handsome and well-chiseled features, such fine eyes, and such a lordly, waving beard were not easily forgotten; his memory suddenly awoke and threw a light on the man as he sat in the gloom, and on the surroundings in which he had met him for the first time.

It was at the feast of Dionysos. Among a drunken crowd, which was rushing wildly along the streets, and which Alexander had joined, himself one of the wildest, this man had marched, sober and dignified as he was at this moment, in the same flowing raiment. This had provoked the feasters, who, being full of wine and of the god, would have nothing that could remind them of the serious side of life. Such sullen reserve on a day of rejoicing was an insult to the jolly giver of the fruits of the earth, and to wine itself, the care-killer; and the mad troop of artists, disguised as Silenus, satyrs, and fauns, had crowded round the stranger to compel him to join their rout and empty the wine-jar which a burly Silenus was carrying before him on his ass.

At first the man had paid no heed to the youths' light mockery; but as they grew bolder, he suddenly stood still, seized the tall faun, who was trying to force the wine-jar on him, by both arms, and, hold-

ing him firmly, fixed his grave, dark eyes on those of the youth. Alexander had not forgotten the half-comical, half-threatening incident, but what he remembered most clearly was the strange scene that followed: for, after the Magian had released his enemy, he bade him take the jar back to Silenus, and proceed on his way, like the ass, on all-fours. And the tall faun, a headstrong, irascible Lesbian, had actually obeyed the stately despot, and crept along on his hands and feet by the side of the donkey. No threats nor mockery of his companions could persuade him to rise. The high spirits of the boisterous crew were quite broken, and before they could turn on the magician he had vanished.

Alexander had afterward learned that he was Serapion, the star-gazer and thaumaturgist, whom all the spirits of heaven and earth obeyed.

When, at the time, the painter had told the story to Philip, the philosopher had laughed at him, though Alexander had reminded him that Plato even had spoken of the daimons as being the guardian spirits of men; that in Alexandria, great and small alike believed in them as a fact to be reckoned with; and that he—Philip himself—had told him that they played a prominent part in the newest systems of philosophy.

But to the skeptic nothing was sure: and if he would deny the existence of the Divinity, he naturally must disbelieve that of any beings in a sphere between the supersensual immortals and sentient human creatures. That a man, the weaker nature, could have any power over daimons, who, as having a nearer affinity to the gods, must, if they existed, be the stronger, he could refute with convincing arguments; and when he saw others nibbling white-thorn-leaves, or daubing their thresholds with pitch

to preserve themselves and the house from evil spirits, he shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, though his father often did such things.

Here was Philip, deep in conversation with the man he had mocked at, and Alexander was flattered by seeing that wise and famous Serapion, in whose powers he himself believed, was talking almost humbly to his brother, as though to a superior. The magician was standing, while the philosopher, as though it were his right, remained seated.

Of what could they be conversing?

Alexander himself was anxious to be going, and only his desire to hear at any rate a few sentences of the talk of two such men detained him longer. As he expected, it bore on Serapion's magical powers; but the bearded man spoke in a very low tone, and if the painter ventured any nearer he would be seen. He could only catch a few incoherent words, till Philip exclaimed in a louder voice: "All that is well-reasoned. But you will be able to write an enduring inscription on the shifting wave sooner than you will shake my conviction that for our spirit, such as Nature has made it, there is nothing infallible or certain."

The painter was familiar with this postulate, and was curious to hear the Magian's reply; but he could not follow his argument till he ended by saying, rather more emphatically: "You, even, do not deny the physical connection of things; but I know the power that causes it. It is the magical sympathy which displays itself more powerfully in the universe, and among human beings, than any other force."

"That is just what remains to be proved," was the reply. But as the other declared in all confidence, "And I can prove it," and was proceeding

to do so, Serapion's companion, a stunted, sharp-featured little Syrian, caught sight of Alexander. The discourse was interrupted, and Alexander, pointing to Melissa, begged his brother to grant them a few minutes' speech with him. Philip, however, scarcely spared a moment for greeting his brother and sister; and when, in answer to his request that they be brief in what they had to say, they replied that a few words would not suffice, Philip was for putting them off till the morrow, as he did not choose to be disturbed just now.

At this Melissa took courage; she turned to Serapion and modestly addressed him:

"You, sir, look like a grave, kind man, and seem to have a regard for my brother. You, then, will help us, no doubt, to cure him of an illusion which troubles us. A dead girl, he says, met him, and he touched her hand."

"And do you, sweet child, think that impossible?" the Magian asked with gentle gravity. "Have the thousands who bring not merely fruit and wine and money for their dead, but who even burn a black sheep for them—you, perhaps, have done the same—have they, I ask, done this so long in vain? I can not believe it. Nay, I know from the ghosts themselves that this gives them pleasure; so they must have the organs of sense."

"That we may rejoice departed souls by food and drink," said Melissa, eagerly, "and that daemons at times mingle with the living, every one of course, believes; but who ever heard that warm blood stirred in them? And how can it be possible that they should remunerate a service with money, which certainly was not coined in their airy realm, but in the mint here?"

"Not too fast, fair maid," replied the Magian,

raising a warning hand. "There is no form which these intermediate beings can not assume. They have the control of all and everything which mortals may use, so the soul of Korinna revisiting these scenes may quite well have paid the ferryman with an obolus."

"Then you know of it?" asked Melissa in surprise; but the Magian broke in, saying:

"Few such things remain hidden from him who knows, not even the smallest, if he strives after such knowledge."

As he spoke he gave the girl such a look as made her eyelids fall, and he went on with greater warmth: "There would be fewer tears shed by death-beds, my child, if we could but show the world the means by which the initiated hold converse with the souls of the dead."

Melissa shook her pretty head sadly, and the Magian kindly stroked her waving hair; then, looking her straight in the eyes, he said: "The dead live. What once has been can never cease to be, any more than out of nothing can anything come. It is so simple; and so, too, are the workings of magic, which amaze you so much. What you call magic, when I practice it, Eros, the great god of love, has wrought a thousand times in your breast. When your heart leaps at your brother's caress, when the god's arrow pierces you, and the glance of a lover fills you with gladness, when the sweet harmonies of fine music wrap your soul above this earth, or the wail of a child moves you to compassion, you have felt the magic power stirring in your own soul. You feel it when some mysterious power, without any will of your own, prompts you to some act, be it what it may. And, besides all this, if a leaf flutters off the table without being

touched by any visible hand, you do not doubt that a draught of air, which you can neither hear nor see, has swept through the room. If at noon the world is suddenly darkened, you know, without looking up at the sky, that it is overcast by a cloud. In the very same way you can feel the nearness of a soul that was dear to you without being able to see it. All that is necessary is to strengthen the faculty which knows its presence, and give it the proper training, and then you will see and hear them. The Magians have the key which unlocks the door of the world of spirits to the human senses. Your noble brother, in whom the claims of the spirit have long since triumphed over those of sense, has found this key without seeking it, since he has been permitted to see Korinna's soul. And if he follows a competent guide he will see her again."

"But why? What good will it do him?" asked Melissa, with a reproachful and anxious look at the man whose influence, as she divined, would be pernicious to her brother, in spite of his knowledge. The Magian gave a compassionate shrug, and in the look he cast at the philosopher, the question was legible, "What have such as these to do with the highest things?"

Philip nodded in impatient assent, and, without paying any further heed to his brother and sister, besought his friend to give him the proofs of the theory that the physical causation of things is weaker than the sympathy which connects them.

Melissa knew full well that any attempt now to separate Philip from Serapion would be futile; however, she would not leave the last chance untried, and asked him gravely whether he had forgotten his mother's tomb.

He hastily assured her that he fully intended to

visit it presently. Fruit and fragrant oil could be had here at any hour of the night.

"And your two wreaths?" she said, in mild reproach, for she had observed them both below the portrait of Korinna.

"I had another use for them," he said, evasively; and then he added, apologetically: "You have brought flowers enough, I know. If I can find time, I will go to-morrow to see my father." He nodded to them both, turned to the Magian, and went on eagerly:

"Then that magical sympathy—"

They did not wait to hear the discussion; Alexander signed to his sister to follow him.

He, too, knew that his brother's ear was deaf now to anything he could say. What Serapion had said had riveted even his attention, and the question whether it might indeed be vouchsafed to living mortals to see the souls of the departed, and hear their voices, exercised his mind so greatly that he could not forbear asking his sister's opinion on such matters.

But Melissa's good sense had felt that there was something not quite sound in the Magian's argument; nor did she conceal her conviction that Philip, who was always hard to convince, had accepted Serapion's views, not because he yielded to the weight of his reasons, but because he—and Alexander, too, for that matter—hoped by his mediation to see the beautiful Korinna again.

This the artist admitted; but when he jested of the danger of a jealous quarrel between him and his brother, for the sake of a dead girl, there was something hard in his tone, and very unlike him, which Melissa did not like.

They breathed more freely as they got out into

the open air, and her efforts to change the subject of their conversation were happily seconded; for at the door they met the family of their neighbor Skopas, the owner of a stone-quarry, whose grave-plot adjoined theirs, and Melissa was happy again as she heard her brother laughing as gayly as ever with Skopas's pretty daughter. The mania had not taken such deep hold of the light-hearted young painter as of Philip, the poring and gloomy philosopher; and she was glad as she heard her friend Ino call Alexander a faithless butterfly, while her sister Hélène declared that he was a godless scoffer.



## CHAPTER V.

THE crowds on the road were now homeward bound, and they were all in such wild, high spirits that, from what was to be seen and heard, it could never have been supposed that they had come from so mournful a scene. They took the road by the sea leading from the Nekropolis to Eleusis, wandering on in the glowing moonlight.

A great procession of Greeks had been to Eleusis, to celebrate the mysteries after the manner of the Greek Eleusis, on which that of Alexandria was modeled. The newly initiated, and the elder adepts, whose duty it was to superintend their reception, had remained in the temple; but the other mystics now swelled the train of those who were coming from the city of the dead.

Here, indeed, Serapis took the place of Pluto, and much that was Greek had assumed strange and Egyptian forms: even the order of the ceremonies had been entirely changed; still, on the African, as on the Attic shore, the Greek cry went up, "To the sea, O mystics!" and the bidding to Iakchos: "Be with us, O Iakchos!"

It could be heard from afar, but the voices of the shouters were already weary, and most of the torches had burned low. The wreaths of ivy and myrtle in their hair were limp; the singers of the hymn no longer kept their ranks; and even Iambe, whose

jests had cheered the mourning Demeter, and whose lips at Eleusis had overflowed with witticisms, was exhausted and silent. She still held in her hand the jar from which she had given the bereaved goddess a reviving draught, but it was empty and she longed for a drink. *She* was indeed a *he*: for it was a youth in woman's dress who played the rollicking part of Iambe, and it was Alexander's friend and comrade Diodoros who had represented the daughter of Pan and Echo, who, the legend said, had acted as slave in the house of Metaneira, the Eleusinian queen, when Demeter took refuge there. His sturdy legs had good reason to be as weary as his tongue, which had known no rest for five hours.

But he caught sight of the large vehicle drawn by four horses, in which the vast corn-measure, the kalathos, which Serapis wore as his distinguishing head-gear, had been conveyed to Eleusis. It was empty now, for the contents had been offered to the god, and the four black horses had an easy task with the great wagon. No one had as yet thought of using it as a conveyance back to the town; but Diodoros, who was both ingenious and tired, ran after it and leaped up. Several now wanted to follow his example, but he pushed them off, even thrusting at them with a newly lighted torch, for he could not be quiet in spite of his fatigue. In the midst of the skirmishing he perceived his friend and Melissa.

His heart had been given to the gentle girl ever since they had been playmates in his father's garden, and when he saw her, walking along downcast, while her brother sported with his neighbor's daughters, he beckoned to her, and, as she refused to accompany him in the wagon, he nimbly sprang off, lifted her up in his arms, made strong by exercise in

the Palaestra, and gently deposited her, in spite of her struggles, on the flat floor of the car, by the side of the empty kalathos.

"The rape of Persephone!" he cried. "The second performance in one night!"

Then the old reckless spirit seized Alexander too.

With as much gay audacity as though he were free of every care and grief, and had signed a compact with Fortune, he picked up pretty Ino, lifted her into the wagon, as Diodoros had done with his sister, and exclaiming, "The third performance!" seated himself by her side.

His bold example found immediate imitators. "A fourth!" "A fifth!" cried one and another, shouting and laughing, with loud calls on Iakchos.

The horses found it hard work, for all along the edge of the car, and round the kalathos of the great Serapis, sat the merry young couples in close array. Alexander and Melissa soon were wreathed with myrtle and ivy. In the vehicle and among the crowd there were none but radiant and frolicsome faces, and no sound but triumphant revelry.

Fatigue was forgotten; it might have been supposed that the sinister sisters, Care and Sorrow, had been banished from earth.

There was a smile even on Melissa's sweet, calm face. At first her old friend's audacious jest had offended her maidenly coyness; but if Diodoros had always loved her, so had she always loved him; and as other well-conducted girls had been content to have the like done to them, and her companion so confidently and roguishly sued for pardon, she gave him a smile which filled his heart with rapture, and said more than words.

It was a comfort, too, to sit still and rest.

She spoke but little, but even she forgot what troubled her when she felt her friend's hand on hers, and he whispered to her that this was the most delightful night he had ever known, and that, of all the sweets the gods had created, she was to him the sweetest ?

The blue sea spread before them, the full moon mirrored on its scarcely heaving surface like a tremulous column of pure and shining silver. The murmur of the ripples came up from the strand as soothing and inviting as the song of the Nereids ; and if a white crest of foam rose on a wave, she could fancy it was the arm of Thetis or Galatea. There, where the blue was deepest, the sea-god Glaukos must dwell, and his heart be gladdened by the merry doings on shore.

Nature is so great ; and as the thought came to her that her heart was not too small to take its greatness in, even to the farthest horizon, it filled her with glad surprise.

And Nature was bountiful too. Melissa could see the happy and gracious face of a divinity in everything she looked upon. The immortals who had afflicted her, and whom she had often bitterly accused, could be kind and merciful too. The sea, on whose shining surface the blue vault of heaven with the moon and stars rocked and twinkled, the soft breeze which fanned her brow, the new delicious longing which filled her heart—all she felt and was conscious of, was a divinity or an emanation of the divine. Mighty Poseidon and majestic Zeus, gentle Selene, and the sportive children of the god of winds, seemed to be strangely near her as she rode along. And it was the omnipotent son of Kypriis, no doubt, who stirred her heart to beat higher than it had ever done before.

Her visit to her mother's grave, too, her prayer and her offerings there, had perhaps moved the spirit of the beloved dead to hover near her now as a guardian genius.

Still, now and again the memory of something terrible passed over her soul like a sweeping shadow; but what it was which threatened her and those dear to her she did not see, and would not now inquire. What the morrow might bring should not cloud the enchantment of this hour. For oh, how fair the world was, and how blessed might mortals be!

"Iakchos! Iakchos!" the voices about her shouted, and it sounded as gleeful as though the breasts of the revelers were overflowing with gladness; and as the scented curls of Diodoros bent over her head, as his hand closed on hers, and his whispered words of love were in her ear, she murmured: "Alexander is right; the world is a banqueting-hall, and life is fair."

"So fair!" echoed the youth, pensively. Then he shouted aloud to his companions: "The world is a banqueting-hall! Bring roses, bring wine, that we may sacrifice to Eros, and pour libations to Dionysos. Light the flaming torches! Iakchos! come, Iakchos, and sanctify our glad festival!"

"Come, Iakchos, come!" cried one and another, and soon the enthusiastic youth's cry was taken up on all sides. But wine-skin and jar were long since emptied.

Hard by, below the cliff, and close to the sea, was a tavern, at the sign of the Cock. Here cool drink was to be had; here the horses might rest—for the drivers had been grumbling bitterly at the heavy load added to the car over the deep sand—and here there was a level plot, under the shade of a spread-

ing sycamore, which had often before now served as a floor for the choric dance.

The vehicle soon drew up in front of the white-washed inn, surrounded on three sides by a trellised arbor, overgrown with figs and vine. The young couples sprang to the ground; and, while the host and his slave dragged up a huge wine-jar with two ears, full of the red juice of the grape, fresh torches were lighted and stuck on poles or fastened to the branches of the sycamore, the youths took their places eager for the dance, and suddenly the festal song went up from their clear throats unbidden, and as though inspired by some mysterious power :

Iakchos, come ! oh, come, Iakchos !  
Hither come, to the scene of our revel,  
The gladsome band of the faithful.  
Shake the fragrant, berried garland,  
Myrtle-twined, that crowns thy love-locks,  
Shedding its odors !  
Tread the measure, with fearless stamp,  
Of this our reckless, rapturous dance,  
In holy rejoicing !  
Hand in hand, thrice beatified,  
Lo we thread the rhythmic, fanciful,  
Mystical mazes !

And the dance begins. Youths and maidens advance to meet each other with graceful movements. Every step must be a thing of beauty, every bend and rising, while the double flutes play faster and faster, and the measured rhythm becomes a wild whirl. They all know the dance, and the music is a guide to the feeling to be expressed; the dancing must be suited to it. Every gesture is a stroke of color which may beautify or mar the picture. Body and spirit are in perfect harmony, combining to represent the feelings that stir the soul. It is a work of art, the art of the arms and feet. Even when

passion is at the highest the guiding law is observed. Nay, when the dancers fly wildly apart, they not merely come together again with unerring certainty, but form in new combination another delightful and perfectly harmonious picture.

"Seek and find" this dance might be called, for the first idea is to represent the wandering of Demeter in search of her daughter Persephone, whom Pluto has carried off to the nether world, till she finds her and clasps her in her motherly arms once more. Thus does the earth bewail the reaped fruit of the field, which is buried in the ground in the winter sowing, to rise again in the spring; thus does a faithful heart pine during absence till it is reunited to the beloved one; thus do we mourn our dead till our soul is assured of their resurrection: and this belief is the end and clew to the mystery.

All this grief and search, this longing and crying for the absent, this final restoration and the bliss of new possession, is set forth by the youths and damsels—now in slow and now in vehement action, but always with infinite grace.

Melissa threw her whole soul into the dance: while Demeter was seeking the lost Persephone, her thoughts were with her brothers; and she laughed as heartily as any one at the jests with which Iambe cheered the stricken mother. And when the joy of meeting was to find expression, she need not think of anything but the fact that the youth who held out his hand to her loved her and cared for her. In this, for the moment, lay the end of all her longing and seeking, the fulfillment of every wish; and as the chorus shouted, "Iakchos!" again and again, her soul seemed to have taken wings.

The reserve of her calm and maidenly nature broke down; in her ecstasy she snatched from her

shoulder the wreath of ivy with which Diodoros had decked her, and waved it aloft. Her long hair had fallen loose in the dance and flowed wildly about her, and her shout of "Iakchos!" rang clear in the night air.

The youth she loved gazed at her with ravished eyes, as at some miracle; she, heedless of the others, threw her arms round his neck, and, as he kissed her, she said once more, but loud enough now to be heard from afar, "The world is a banqueting-hall!" and again she joined in the shout of "Iakchos!" her eyes bright with excitement. Cups filled high with wine now circulated among the mad-cap mystics; even Melissa refreshed herself, handing the beaker to her lover, and Diodoros raised to his mouth that place on the rim which her lips had touched.

"O life! fount of joys!" cried Diodoros, kissing her and pressing her closer to him. "Come, Iakchos! Behold with envy how thankfully two mortals can bless the gift of life.—But where is Alexander? To none but to our Andreas have I ever confided the secret I have borne in my heart since that day when we went to the circus. But now! Oh, it is so much happiness for two hearts! My friend, too, must have part in it!"

At this Melissa clasped her hand to her brow, as though waking from a dream. How hot she was from dancing, and the unusual strength of the wine and water she had drunk!

The danger impending over both her brothers came back to her mind. She had always been accustomed to think of others rather than herself, and her festal mood dropped from her suddenly, like a mantle of which the brooch breaks. She vehemently shook herself free of her lover's embrace, and her eyes glanced from one to another in rapid search.



There stood pretty Ino, who had danced the mazy measure with Alexander. Panting for breath, she stood leaning her weary head and tangled hair against the trunk of the tree, a wine-cup upside down in her right hand. It must be empty; but where was he who had emptied it?

Her neighbor's daughter would surely know. Had the reckless youth quarreled with the girl? No, no!

One of the tavern-keeper's slaves, Ino told her, had whispered something to Alexander, whereupon he had instantly followed the man into the house. Melissa knew that it could be no trivial matter which detained him there, and hurried after him into the tavern.

The host, a Greek, and his buxom wife, affected not to know for whom she was inquiring; but, perceiving the anxiety which spoke in every line of the girl's face, when she explained that she was Alexander's sister, they at first looked at each other doubtingly, and then the woman, who had children of her own, who fondly loved each other, felt her heart swell within her, and she whispered, with her finger on her lips: "Do not be uneasy, pretty maid; my husband will see him well through."

And then Melissa heard that the Egyptian, who had alarmed her in the Nekropolis, was the spy Zminis, who, as her old slave Dido had once told her, had been a rejected suitor of her mother's before she had married Heron, and who was therefore always glad to bring trouble on all who belonged to her father's house. How often had she heard of the annoyances in which this man had involved her father and Alexander, who were apt to be very short with the man!

This tale-bearer, who held the highest position

as guardian of the peace under the captain of the night-watch, was of all men in the city the most hated and feared; and he had heard her brother speaking of Cæsar in a tone of mockery which was enough to bring him to prison, to the quarries, nay, to death. Glaukias, the sculptor, had previously seen the Egyptian on the bridge, where he had detained those who were returning home from the city of the dead. He and his followers had already stopped the poet Argeios on his way, but the thyrsus staves of the Dionysiac revelers had somewhat spoiled the game for him and his satellites. He was probably still standing on the bridge. Glaukias had immediately run back, at any risk, to warn Alexander. He and the painter were now in hiding, and would remain in safety, come what might, in the cellar at the Cock, till the coast was clear again. The tavern-keeper strongly advised no one to go meddling with his wine-skins and jars.

"Much less that Egyptian dog!" cried his wife, doubling her fist as though the hated mischief-maker stood before her already.

"Poor, helpless lamb!" she murmured to herself, as she looked compassionately at the fragile, town-bred girl, who stood gazing at the ground as if she had been struck by lightning. She remembered, too, how hard life had seemed to her in her own young days, and glanced with pride at her brawny arms, which were able indeed to work and manage.

But what now?

The drooping flower suddenly raised her head, as if moved by a spring, exclaiming: "Thank you heartily, thank you! But that will never do. If Zminis searches your premises he will certainly go into the cellar; for what can he not do in Cæsar's name? I will not part from my brother."

"Then you, too, are a welcome guest at the Cock," interrupted the woman, and her husband bowed low, assuring her that the Cock was as much her house as it was his.

But the helpless town-bred damsel declined this friendly invitation; for her shrewd little head had devised another plan for saving her brother, though the tavern-keepers, to whom she confided it in a whisper, laughed and shook their heads over it.

Diodoros was waiting outside in anxious impatience; he loved her, and he was her brother's best friend. All that he could do to save Alexander he would gladly do, she knew. On the estate which would some day be his, there was room and to spare to hide the fugitives, for one of the largest gardens in the town was owned by his father. His extensive grounds had been familiar to her from her childhood, for her own mother and her lover's had been friends; and Andreas, the freedman, the overseer of Polybius's gardens and plantations, was dearer to her and her brothers than any one else in Alexandria.

Nor had she deceived herself, for Diodoros made Alexander's cause his own, in his eager, vehement way; and the plan for his deliverance seemed doubly admirable as proceeding from Melissa. In a few minutes Alexander and the sculptor were released from their hiding-place, and all further care for them was left to Diodoros.

They were both very craftily disguised. No one would have recognized the artists in two sailors, whose Phrygian caps completely hid their hair, while a heavy fisherman's apron was girt about their loins; still less would any one have suspected from their laughing faces that imprisonment, if nothing worse, hung over them. Their change of garb had given rise to so much fun; and now, on

hearing how they were to be smuggled into the town, their merriment grew higher, and proved catching to those who were taken into the secret. Only Melissa was oppressed with anxious care, in spite of her lover's eager consolation.

Glaukias, a man of scarcely middle height, was sure of not being recognized, and he and his comrades looked forward to whatever might happen as merely an amusing jest. At the same time they had to balk the hated chief of the city guards and his menials of their immediate prey; but they had played them a trick or two ere now. It might turn out really badly for Alexander; still, it was only needful to keep him concealed till Cæsar should arrive; then he would be safe, for the Emperor would certainly absorb all the thoughts and time of the captain of the night-watch and his chief officers. In Alexandria, anything once past was so soon forgotten! When once Caracalla was gone—and it was to be hoped that he would not stay long—no one would ever think again of any biting speech made before his arrival.

The morning must bring what it might, so long as the present moment was gay!

So, refreshed and cheered by rest and wine, the party of mystics prepared to set out again; and, as the procession started, no one who did not know it had observed that the two artists, disguised as sailors, were, by Melissa's advice, hidden inside the kalathos of Serapis, which would easily have held six, and was breast-high even for Alexander, who was a tall man. They squatted on the floor of the huge vessel, with a jar of wine between them, and peeped over now and then with a laugh at the girls, who had again seated themselves on the edge of the car.

When they were fairly on their way once more, Alexander and his companions were so daring that, whenever they could do it unobserved, they pelted the damsels with the remains of the corn, or sprinkled them with wine-drops. Glaukias had the art of imitating the pattering of rain and the humming of a fly to perfection with his lips; and when the girls complained of the tiresome insect buzzing in their faces, or declared, when a drop fell on them, that in spite of the blue and cloudless sky it was certainly beginning to rain, the two men had to cover their mouths with their hands, that their laughter might not betray them.

Melissa, who had comforted Ino with the assurance that Alexander had been called away quite unexpectedly, was now sitting by her side, and perceived, of course, what tricks the men in the kalathos were playing; but, instead of amusing her, they only made her anxious.

Every one about her was laughing and joking, but for her all mirth was at an end. Fear, indeed, weighed on her like an incubus, when the car reached the bridge and rattled across it. It was lined with soldiers and lictors, who looked closely at each one, even at Melissa herself. But no one spoke to her, and when the water lay behind them she breathed more freely. But only for a moment; for she suddenly remembered that they would presently have to pass through the gate leading past Hadrian's western wall into the town. If Zminis were waiting there instead of on the bridge, and were to search the vehicle, then all would be lost, for he had looked her, too, in the face with those strange, fixed eyes of his; and that where he saw the sister he would also seek the brother, seemed to her quite certain. Thus her presence was a

source of peril to Alexander, and she must at any cost avert that.

She immediately put out her hand to Diodoros, who was walking at her side, and with his help slipped down from her seat. Then she whispered her fears to him, and begged him to quit the party and conduct her home.

This was a surprising and delightful task for her lover. With a jesting word he leaped on to the car, and even succeeded in murmuring to Alexander, unobserved, that Melissa had placed herself under his protection. When they got home, they could tell Heron and Andreas that the youths were safe in hiding. Melissa could explain, to-morrow morning, how everything had happened. Then he drew Melissa's arm through his, loudly shouted, "Iakchos!" and with a swift dance-step soon outstripped the wagon.

Not fifty paces beyond, large pine torches sent bright flames up skyward, and by their light the girl could see the dreaded gateway, with the statues of Hadrian and Sabina, and in front of them, in the middle of the road, a horseman, who, as they approached, came trotting forward to meet them on his tall steed. His head towered above every one else in the road; and as she looked up at him her heart almost ceased beating, for her eyes met those of the dreaded Egyptian; their white balls showed plainly in his brown, lean face, and their cruel, evil sparkle had stamped them clearly on her memory.

On her right a street turned off from the road, and saying in a low tone, "This way," she led Diodoros, to his surprise, into the shadow. His heart beat high. Did she, whose coy and maidenly austerity before and after the intoxication of the dance had vouchsafed him hardly a kind look or a clasp

of the hand—did she even yearn for some tender embrace alone and in darkness? Did the quiet, modest girl, who, since she had ceased to be a child, had but rarely given him a few poor words, long to tell him that which hitherto only her bright eyes and the kiss of her pure young lips had betrayed?

He drew her more closely to him in blissful expectation; but she shyly shrank from his touch, and before he could murmur a single word of love she exclaimed in terror, as though the hand of the persecutor were already laid on her: "Fly, fly! That house will give us shelter."

And she dragged him after her into the open doorway of a large building. Scarcely had they entered the dark vestibule when the sound of hoofs was heard, and the glare of torches dispelled the darkness outside.

"Zminis! It is he—he is following us!" she whispered, scarcely able to speak; and her alarm was well founded, for the Egyptian had recognized her, and supposed her companion to be Alexander. He had ridden down the street with his torch-bearers, but where she had hidden herself his keen eyes could not detect, for the departing sound of hoofs betrayed to the breathless listeners that the pursuer had left their hiding-place far behind him. Presently the pavement in front of the house which sheltered them rang again with the tramp of the horse, till it died away at last in the direction of Hadrian's gate. Not till then did Melissa lift her hand from her painfully throbbing heart.

But the Egyptian would, no doubt, have left his spies in the street, and Diodoros went out to see if the road was clear. Melissa remained alone in the dark entrance, and began to be anxious as to how

she could explain her presence there if the inhabitants should happen to discover it; for in this vast building, in spite of the lateness of the hour, there still was some one astir. She had for some minutes heard a murmuring sound which reached her from an inner chamber; but it was only by degrees that she collected herself so far as to listen more closely, to ascertain whence it came and what it could mean.

A large number of persons must be assembled there, for she could distinguish several male voices, and now and then a woman's. A door was opened. She shrank closer to the wall, but the seconds became minutes, and no one appeared.

At last she fancied she heard the moving of benches or seats, and many voices together shouting she knew not what. Then again a door creaked on its hinges, and after that all was so still that she could have heard a needle drop on the floor; and this alarming silence continued till presently a deep, resonant man's voice was audible.

The singular manner in which this voice gave every word its full and equal value suggested to her fancy that something was being read aloud. She could distinctly hear the sentence with which the speech or reading began. After a short pause it was repeated somewhat more quickly, as though the speaker had this time uttered it from his own heart.

It consisted of these six simple words, "The fullness of the time was come"; and Melissa listened no more to the discourse which followed, spoken as it was in a low voice, for this sentence rang in her ears as if it were repeated by an echo.

She did not, to be sure, understand its meaning, but she felt as though it must have some deep sig-



nificance. It came back to her again and again, like a melody which haunts the inward ear against our will; and her meditative fancy was trying to solve its meaning, when Diodoros returned to tell her that the street was quite empty. He knew now where they were, and, if she liked, he could lead her by a way which would not take them through the gate. Only Christians, Egyptians, and other common folks dwelt in this quarter; however, since his duty as her protector had this day begun, he would fulfill it to the best of his ability.

She went with him out into the street, and when they had gone a little way he clasped her to him and kissed her hair.

His heart was full. He knew now that she, whom he had loved when she walked in his father's garden in her little child's tunic, holding her mother's hand, returned his passion. Now the time was come for asking whether she would permit him to beg her father's leave to woo her.

He stopped in the shadow of a house near, and, while he poured out to her all that stirred his breast, carried away by tender passion, and describing in his vehement way how great and deep his love was, in spite of the utter fatigue which weighed on her body and soul after so many agitations, she felt with deep thankfulness the immense happiness of being more precious than aught else on earth to a dear, good man. Love, which had so long lain dormant in her as a bud, and then opened so quickly only to close again under her alarms, unfolded once more and blossomed for him again—not as it had done just now in passionate ecstasy, but, as be-seemed her calm, transparent nature, with moderated joy, which, however, did not lack due warmth and winning tenderness.

Happiness beyond words possessed them both. She suffered him to seal his vows with kisses, herself offering him her lips, as her heart swelled with fervent thanksgiving for so much joy and such a full measure of love.

She was indeed a precious jewel, and the passion of his stormy heart was tempered by such genuine reverence that he gladly kept within the bounds which her maidenly modesty prescribed. And how much they had to say to each other in this first opening of their hearts, how many hopes for the future found utterance in words! The minutes flew on and became hours, till at last Melissa begged him to quit the marble seat on which they had so long been resting, if indeed her feet could still carry her home.

Little as it pleased him, he did her bidding. But as they went on he felt that she hung heavy on his arm and could only lift her little feet with the greatest difficulty. The street was too dark for him to see how pale she was; and yet he never took his eyes off her dear but scarcely distinguishable features. Suddenly he heard a faint whisper as in a dream, "I can go no farther," and at once led her back to the marble seat.

He first carefully spread his mantle over the stone and then wrapped her in it as tenderly as a mother might cover her shivering child, for a cooler breeze gave warning of the coming dawn. He himself crept close under the wall by her side, so as not to be seen, for a long train of people, with servants carrying lanterns before them, now came out of the house they had just left and down the street. Who these could be who walked at so late an hour in such solemn silence neither of them knew. They certainly sent up no joyful shout of "Iakchos!" no

wild lament; no cheerful laughter nor sounds of mourning were to be heard from the long procession which passed along the street, two and two, at a slow pace. As soon as they had passed the last houses, men and women alike began to sing; no leader started them, nor lyre accompanied them, and yet their song went up as though with one voice.

Diodoros and Melissa knew every note sung by the Greeks or Egyptians of Alexandria, at this or any other festival, but this melody was strange to them; and when the young man whispered to the girl, "What is it that they are singing?" she replied, as though startled from sleep, "They are no mere mortals!"

Diodoros shuddered; he fancied that the procession was floating above the earth; that, if they had been indeed men of flesh and blood, their steps would have been more distinctly audible on the pavement. Some of them appeared to him to be taller than common mortals, and their chant was certainly that of another world than this where he dwelt. Perhaps these were daimons, the souls of departed Egyptians, who, after a midnight visit to those they had left behind them, were returning to the rock tombs, of which there were many in the stony hills to which this street led. They were walking toward these tombs, and not toward the gate; and Diodoros whispered his suspicion to his companion, clasping his hand on an amulet in the semblance of an eye, which his Egyptian nurse had fastened round his neck long ago with an Anubic thread, to protect him against the evil-eye and magic spells.

But Melissa was listening with such devout attention to the chant that she did not hear him. The fatigue which had reached such a painful climax

had, during this peaceful rest, given way to a blissful unconsciousness of self. It was a kind of happiness to feel no longer the burden of exhaustion, and the song of the wanderers was like a cradle-song, lulling her to sweet dreams. It filled her with gladness, and yet it was not glad, not even cheerful. It went to her heart, and yet it was not mournful—not in the least like the passionate lament of Isis for Osiris, or that of Demeter bewailing her daughter. The emotion it aroused in her was a sweetly sorrowful compassion, which included herself, her brothers, her father, her lover, all who were doomed to suffering and death, even the utter stranger, for whom she had hitherto felt no sympathy.

And the compassion bore within it a sense of comfort which she could not explain, or perhaps would not inquire into. It struck her, too, now and then, that the strain had a ring as of thanksgiving. It was, no doubt, addressed to the gods, and for that reason it appealed to her, and she would gladly have joined in it, for she, too, was grateful to the immortals, and above all to Eros, for the love which had been born in her heart and had found such an ardent return. She sighed as she listened to every note of the chant, and it worked upon her like a healing draught.

The struggle of her will against bodily fatigue, and finally against the mental exhaustion of so much bliss, the conviction that her heavy, weary feet would perhaps fail to carry her home, and that she must seek shelter somewhere for the night, had disturbed her greatly. Now she was quite calm, and as much at ease as she was at home sitting with her father, her stitching in her hand, while she dreamed of her mother and her childhood in the past. The singing had fallen on her agitated soul

like the oil poured by the mariner on the sea to still the foaming breakers. She felt it so.

She could not help thinking of the time when she could fall asleep on her mother's bosom in the certainty that tender love was watching over her. The happiness of childhood, when she loved everything she knew—her family, the slaves, her father's birds, the flowers in the little garden, the altar of the goddess to whom she made offering, the very stars in the sky—seemed to come over her, and there she sat in dreamy lassitude, her head on her lover's shoulder, till the last stragglers of the procession, who were women, many of them carrying little lamps in their hands, had almost all gone past.

Then she suddenly felt an eager jerk in the shoulder on which her head was resting.

"Look—look there!" he whispered; and as her eyes followed the direction of his finger, she too started, and exclaimed, "Korinna!—Did you know her?"

"She had often come to my father's garden," he replied, "and I saw her portrait in Alexander's room. These are souls from Hades that we have seen. We must offer sacrifice, for those to whom they show themselves they draw after them." At this Melissa, too, shuddered, and exclaimed in horror: "O Diodoros, not to death! We will ask the priests to-morrow morning what sacrifice may redeem us. Anything rather than the grave and the darkness of Hades!—Come, I am strong again now. Let us get away from hence and go home."

"But we must go through the gate now," replied the youth. "It is not well to follow in the footsteps of the dead."

Melissa, however, insisted on going on through

the street. Terrified as she was of the nether world and the disembodied souls, she would on no account risk falling into the hands of the horrible Egyptian, who might compel her to betray her brother's hiding-place; and Diodoros, who was ashamed to show her the fears which still possessed him, did as she desired.

But it was a comfort to him in this horror of death, which had come over him now for the first time in his life, to kiss the maid once more, and hold her warm hand in his as they walked on; while the strange chant of the nocturnal procession still rang in her ears, and now and then the words recurred to her mind which she had heard in the house where the departed souls had gathered together:

"The fullness of the time was come."

Did this refer to the hour when the dead came to the end of their life on earth; or was there some great event impending on the city and its inhabitants, for which the time had now come? Had the words anything to do with Cæsar's visit? Had the dead come back to life to witness the scenes which they saw approaching with eyes clearer than those of mortals?

And then she remembered Korinna, whose fair, pale face had been strangely lighted up by the lamp she carried; and, again, the Magian's assurance that the souls of the departed were endowed with every faculty possessed by the living, and that "those who knew" could see them and converse with them.

Then Serapion had been right in saying this; and her hand trembled in her lover's as she thought to herself that the danger which now threatened Philip was estrangement from the living through intercourse with the dead. Her own dead mother,

perhaps, had floated past among these wandering souls, and she grieved to think that she had neglected to look for her and give her a loving greeting. Even Diodoros, who was not generally given to silent meditation, had his own thoughts to pursue; and so they walked on in silence till suddenly they heard a dull murmur of voices. This startled them, and looking up they saw before them the rocky cliffs in which the Egyptians long since, and now in later times the Christians, had hewn caves and tombs. From the door of one of these, only a few paces beyond where they stood, light streamed out; and as they were about to pass it a large dog barked. Immediately on this a man came out, and in a rough, deep voice asked them the pass-word. Diodoros, seized with sudden terror of the dark figure, which he believed to be a risen ghost, took to his heels, dragging Melissa with him. The dog flew after them, barking loudly; and when the youth stooped to pick up a stone to scare him off, the angry brute sprang on him and dragged him down.

Melissa screamed for help, but the gruff voice angrily bade her be silent. Far from obeying him, the girl shouted louder than ever; and now, out of the entrance to the cave, close behind the scene of the disaster, came a number of men with lamps and tapers. They were the same daimons whose song she had heard in the street; she could not be mistaken. On her knees, by the side of her lover as he lay on the ground, she stared up at the apparitions.

A stone flew at the dog to scare him off, and a second, larger than the first, whisked past her and hit Diodoros on the head; she heard the dull blow.

At this a cold hand seemed to clutch her heart; everything about her melted into one whirling, colorless cloud. Pale as death, she threw up her arms to

protect herself, and then, overcome with terror and fatigue, with a faint cry of anguish she lost consciousness.

When she opened her eyes again her head was resting in the lap of a kind, motherly woman, while some men were just bearing away the senseless form of Diodoros on a bier.



## CHAPTER VI.

THE sun had risen an hour since. Heron had betaken himself to his workshop, whistling as he went, and in the kitchen his old slave Argutis was standing over the hearth preparing his master's morning meal. He dropped a pinch of dill into the barley-porridge, and shook his gray head solemnly.

His companion Dido, a Syrian, whose wavy white hair contrasted strangely with her dark skin, presently came in, and, starting up, he hastily inquired, "Not in yet?"

"No," said the other woman, whose eyes were full of tears. "And you know what my dream was. Some evil has come to her, I am certain; and when the master hears of it—" Here she sobbed aloud; but the slave reproved her for useless weeping.

"You never carried her in your arms," whimpered the woman.

"But often enough on my shoulder," retorted the Gaul, for Argutis was a native of Augusta Trevirorum, on the Moselle. "As soon as the porridge is ready you must take it in and prepare the master."

"That his first fury may fall on me!" said the old woman, peevishly. "I little thought when I was young!"

"That is a very old story," said Argutis, "and

we both know what the master's temper is. I should have been off long ago if only you could make his porridge to his mind. As soon as I have dished it I will go to seek Alexander—there is nothing to prevent me—for it was with him that she left the house."

At this the old woman dried her tears, and cried : "Yes, only go, and make haste. I will do everything else. Great gods, if she should be brought home dead! I know how it is; she could bear the old man's temper and this moping life no longer, and has thrown herself into the water. My dream, my dream! Here—here is the dish, and now go and find the boy. Still, Philip is the elder."

"He!" exclaimed the slave in a scornful tone. "Yes, if you want to know what the flies are talking about! Alexander for me. He has his head screwed on the right way, and he will find her if any man in Egypt can, and bring her back, alive or dead."

"Dead!" echoed Dido, with a fresh burst of sobs, and her tears fell in the porridge, which Argutis, indeed, in his distress of mind had forgotten to salt.

While this conversation was going on the gem-cutter was feeding his birds. Can this man, who stands there like any girl, tempting his favorites to feed, with fond words and whistling, and the offer of attractive dainties, be the stormy blusterer of last night? There is not a coaxing name that he does not lavish on them, while he fills their cups with fresh seed and water; and how carefully he moves his big hand as he strews the little cages with clean sand! He would not for worlds scare the poor little prisoners who cheer his lonely hours,

and who have long since ceased to fear him. A turtle-dove takes peas, and a hedge-sparrow picks ants' eggs from his lips; a white-throat perches on his left hand to snatch a caterpillar from his right. The huge man was in his garden soon after sunrise gathering the dewy leaves for his feathered pets. But he talks and plays longest with the starling which his lost wife gave him. She had bought it in secret from the Bedouin who for many years had brought shells for sale from the Red Sea, to surprise her husband with the gift. The clever bird had first learned to call her name, *Olympias*; and then, without any teaching, had picked up his master's favorite lament, "My strength, my strength!"

Heron regarded this bird as a friend who understood him, and, like him, remembered the never-to-be-forsaken dead. For three years had the gem-cutter been a widower, and he still thought more constantly and fondly of his lost wife than of the children she had left him. Heron scratched the bird's knowing little head, saying in a tone which betrayed his pity both for himself and his pet: "Yes, old fellow, you would rather have a soft white finger to stroke you down. I can hear her now, when she would call you 'sweet little pet,' or 'dear little creature.' We shall neither of us ever hear such gentle, loving words again. Do you remember how she would look up with her dear sweet face—and was it not a lovely face?—when you called her by her name '*Olympias*'? How many a time have her rosy lips blown up your feathers, and cried, 'Well done, little fellow!'—Ay, and she would say 'Well done' to me too, when I had finished a piece of work well. Ah, and what an eye she had, particularly for art! But now—

well, the children give me a good word too, now that her lips are silent!"

"Olympias!" cried the bird loudly and articulately, and the clouds that shadowed the gem-cutter's brow lifted a little, as with an affectionate smile he went on:

"Yes, yes; you would be glad, too, to have her back again. You call her now, as I did yesterday, standing by her grave—and she sends you her love. Do you hear, little one? Peck away at the old man's finger; he knows you mean it kindly, and it does not hurt. I was all alone out there, and Selene looked down on us in silence. There was rioting and shouting all round, but I could hear the voice of our dead. She was very near me, and her sad soul showed me that she still cared for me. I had taken a jar of our best wine of Byblos under my cloak; as soon as I had poured oil on her gravestone and shed some of the noble liquor, the earth drank it up as though it were thirsty. Not a drop was left. Yes, little fellow, she accepted the gift; and when I fell on my knees to meditate on her, she vouchsafed replies to many of my questions. We talked together as we used—you know. And we remembered you, too; I gave you her love. You understand me, little fellow, don't you? And, I tell you, better times are coming now."

He turned from the bird with a sharp movement of annoyance, for the slave-woman came in with the bowl of barley-porridge.

"You!" exclaimed Heron, in surprise. "Where is Melissa?"

"She will come presently," said the old woman, in a low and doubtful tone.

"Oh, thanks for the oracle!" said the artist, ironically.

"How you mock at a body!" said the old woman. "I meant— But eat first—eat. Anger and grief are ill food for an empty stomach."

Heron sat down to the table and began to eat his porridge, but he presently tossed away the spoon, exclaiming:

"I do not fancy it, eating by myself."

Then, with a puzzled glance at Dido, he asked in a tone of vexation:

"Well, why are you waiting here? And what is the meaning of all that nipping and tugging at your dress? Have you broken another dish? No? Then have done with that cursed head-shaking, and speak out at once!"

"Eat, eat," repeated Dido, retreating to the door, but Heron called her back with vehement abuse; but when she began again her usual complaint, "I never thought, when I was young—" Heron recovered the good temper he had been rejoicing in so lately, and retorted: "Oh! yes, I know, I have the daughter of a great potentate to wait on me. And if it had only occurred to Cæsar, when he was in Syria, to marry your sister, I should have had his sister-in-law in my service. But at any rate I forbid howling. You might have learned in the course of thirty years, that I do not eat my fellow-creatures. So, now, confess at once what is wrong in the kitchen, and then go and fetch Melissa."

The woman was, perhaps, wise to defer the evil moment as long as possible. Matters might soon change for the better, and good or evil could come only from without. So Dido clung to the literal sense of her master's question, and something noteworthy had actually happened in the kitchen. She drew a deep breath, and told him that a subordinate of the night-watch had come in and asked whether

Alexander were in the house, and where his painting-room was.

"And you gave him an exact description?" asked Heron.

But the slave shook her head; she again began to fidget with her dress, and said, timidly:

"Argutis was there, and he says no good can come of the night-watch. He told the man what he thought fit, and sent him about his business."

At this Heron interrupted the old woman with such a mighty blow of his fist on the table that the porridge jumped in the bowl, and he exclaimed in a fury:

"That is what comes of treating slaves as our equals! They begin to think for themselves. A stupid blunder can spoil the best day! The captain of the night-watch, I would have you to know, is a very great man, and very likely a friend of Seleukus's, whose daughter Alexander has just painted. The picture is attracting some attention.—Attention? What am I saying? Every one who has been allowed to see it is quite crazy about it. Everything else that was on show in the embalmers' hall was mere trash by comparison. Often enough have I grumbled at the boy, who would rather be anywhere than here; but, this time, I had some ground for being proud to be his father! And now the captain of the watch sends his secretary, or something of the kind, no doubt, in order to have his portrait, or his wife's or daughter's—if he has one—painted by the artist who did Korinna's; and his own father's slave—it drives me mad to think of it—makes a face at the messenger and sends him all astray. I will give Argutis a lesson! But by this time, perhaps— Just go and fetch him in."

With these words Heron again dropped his spoon,

wiped his beard, and then, seeing that Dido was still standing before him as though spellbound, twitching her slave's gray gown, he repeated his order in such angry tones—though before he had spoken to her as gently as if she were one of his own children—that the old woman started violently and made for the door, crouching low and whimpering bitterly.

The soft-hearted tyrant was really sorry for the faithful old servant he had bought a generation since for the home to which he had brought his fair young wife, and he began to speak kindly to her, as he had previously done to the birds.

This comforted the old woman so much that again she could not help crying; but, notwithstanding the sincerity of her tears, being accustomed of old to take advantage of her master's moods, she felt that now was the time to tell her melancholy story. First of all she would at any rate see whether Melissa had not meanwhile returned; so she humbly kissed the hem of his robe and hurried away.

"Send Argutis to me!" Heron roared after her, and he returned to his breakfast with renewed energy.

He thought, as he ate, of his son's beautiful work, and the foolish self-importance of Argutis, so faithful, and usually, it must be owned, so shrewd. Then his eyes fell on Melissa's vacant place opposite to him, and he suddenly pushed away his bowl and rose to seek his daughter.

At this moment the starling called, in a clear, inviting tone, "Olympias!" and this cheered him, reminding him of the happy hour he had passed at his wife's grave and the good augury he had had there. The belief in a better time at hand, of which he had spoken to the bird, again took possession of

his sanguine soul ; and, fully persuaded that Melissa was detained in her own room or elsewhere by some trifling matter, he went to the window and shouted her name ; for hers, too, opened on to the garden.

And it seemed as though the dear, obedient girl had come at his bidding, for, as he turned back into the room again, Melissa was standing in the open door.

After the pretty Greek greeting, " Joy be with you," which she faintly answered, he asked her, as fractiously as though he had spent hours of anxiety, where she had been so long. But he was suddenly silent, for he was astonished to see that she had not come from her room, but, as her dress betrayed, from some long expedition. Her appearance, too, had none of the exquisite neatness which it usually displayed ; and then—what a state she was in ! Whence had she come so early in the day ?

The girl took off the kerchief that covered her head, and with a faint groan pushed her tangled hair off her temples, and her bosom heaved as she panted out in a weary voice : " Here I am ! But O, father, what a night I have spent ! "

Heron could not for a minute or two find words to answer her.

What had happened to the girl ? What could it be which made her seem so strange and unlike herself ? He gazed at her, speechless, and alarmed by a hundred fearful suspicions. He felt as a mother might who has kissed her child's fresh, healthy lips at night, and in the morning finds them burning with fever.

Melissa had never been ill from the day of her birth ; since she had donned the dress of a full-grown maiden she had never altered ; day after day



and at all hours she had been the same in her quiet, useful, patient way, always thinking of her brothers, and caring for him rather than for herself.

It had never entered into his head to suppose that she could alter; and now, instead of the gentle, contented face with faintly rosy cheeks, he saw a pallid countenance and quivering lips. What mysterious fire had this night kindled in those calm eyes, which Alexander was fond of comparing to those of a gazelle? They were sunk, and the dark shadows that encircled them were a shock to his artistic eye. These were the eyes of a girl who had raved like a *mænad* the night through. Had she not slept in her quiet little room; had she been rushing with Alexander in the wild Bacchic rout; or had something dreadful happened to his son?

Nothing could have been so great a relief to him as to rave and rage as was his wont, and he felt strongly prompted to do so; but there was something in her which moved him to pity or shyness, he knew not which, and kept him quiet. He silently followed her with his eyes while she folded her mantle and kerchief in her orderly way, and hastily gathered together the stray, curly locks of her hair, smoothed them, and bound them round her head.

Some one, however, must break the silence, and he gave a sigh of relief when the girl came up to him and asked him, in a voice so husky as to give him a fresh shock:

"Is it true that a Scythian, one of the night-watch, has been here already?"

Then he broke out, and it really did him good to give vent to his repressed feelings in an angry speech:

"There again—the wisdom of slaves! The so-called Scythian brought a message from his master.

The captain of the night-watch—you will see—wishes to honor Alexander with a commission."

"No, no," interrupted the girl. "They are hunting my brother down. I thank the gods that the Scythian should have come; it shows that Alexander is still free."

The gem-cutter clasped his bushy hair in both hands, for it seemed to him that the room was whirling round. But his old habits still got the better of him; he roared out with all the power of his mighty lungs: "What is that? What do you say? What has Alexander done? Where have you—both of you—been?" With two long strides the angry man came close up to the terrified girl; the birds fluttered in their cages, and the starling repeated his cries in melancholy tones. Heron stood still, pushing his fingers through his thick gray hair, and with a sharp laugh exclaimed: "I came away from her grave full of fresh hopes for better days, and this is how they are fulfilled! I looked for fame, and I find disgrace! And you, hussy! where have you spent this night—where have you come from? I ask you once more!"

He raised his fist and shook it close in front of Melissa's eyes.

She stood before him as pale as death, and with wide-open eyes, from which the heavy tears dropped slowly, one by one, trickling down her cheeks as if they were tired. Heron saw them, and his rage melted. He staggered to a seat like a drunken man, and, hiding his face in his hands, moaned aloud, "Wretch, wretch that I am!" But his child's soft hand was laid on his head; warm, girlish lips kissed his brow; and Melissa whispered beseechingly: "Peace, father, peace. All may yet be well. I have something to tell you that will

make you glad too ; yes, I am sure it will make you glad."

Her father shrugged his shoulders incredulously, but wanted to know immediately what the miracle was that could smooth his brow. Melissa, however, would not tell him till it came in its place in her story. So he had to submit ; he drew his seat up to the table, and took up a lump of modeling-wax to keep his restless fingers employed while he listened. She, too, sat down ; she could scarcely stand.

At first he listened calmly to her narrative ; and when she told him of Alexander's jest at Cæsar's expense his face brightened. His Alexandrian blood and his relish for a biting speech got the upper hand ; he gave a sounding slap on his mighty leg, and exclaimed : "A cursed good thought ! But the boy forgot that when Zeus only lamed his son it was because he is immortal ; while Cæsar's brother was as feeble a mortal as Caracalla himself is said to be at this day."

He laughed noisily ; but it was for the last time that morning ; for hardly had he heard the name of Zminis, and learned that it was he who had overheard Alexander, than he threw down the wax and started to his feet in horror, crying :

"That dog, who dared to cast his eyes on your mother, and persecuted her long after she had shown him the door ! That sly mischief-maker ! Many a time has he set snares in our path. If he succeeds in tightening the noose into which the boy has so heedlessly thrust his head— But first tell me, has he caught him already, or is Alexander still at liberty ?"

But no one, not even Argutis, who was still out on the search, could tell him this ; and he was now

so greatly disturbed that, during the rest of Melissa's narrative, he perpetually paced the room, interrupting her now and then with questions or with outbursts of indignation. And then it occurred to him that he ought himself to seek his son, and he occupied himself with getting ready to go out.

Even when she spoke of the Magian, and his conviction that those who know are able to hold intercourse with the souls of the dead, he shrugged his shoulders incredulously, and went on lacing his sandals. But when Melissa assured him that not she alone, but Diodoros with her, had seen the wandering soul of the departed Korinna in the train of ghosts, he dropped the straps he had bound round his ankle, and asked her who this Magian was, and where he might be found. However, she knew no more than that his name was Serapion, and she briefly described his dignified presence.

Heron had already seen the man, and he seemed still to be thinking of him, when Melissa, with a blush and downcast eyes, confessed that, as soon as he was well again, Diodoros was coming to her father to ask her of him in marriage.

It was a long story before she came at last to her own concerns, but it was always her way not to think of herself till every one else had had his due.

But what about her father? Had she spoken inaudibly, or was he really unable to-day to be glad? or what ailed him, that he paid no heed to the news which, even for him, was not without its importance, but, without a word of consent or disapproval, merely bade her go on with her story?

Melissa called him by name, as if to wake a man from sleep, and asked whether it were indeed possible that he really felt no pleasure in the happy

prospect that lay before her, and that she had confessed to him. And now Heron lent an ear, and gave her to understand the satisfaction of his fatherly heart by kissing her. This news, in fact, made up for much that was evil, for Diodoros was a son-in-law after his own heart, and not merely because he was rich, or because his mother had been so great a friend of Olympias's. No, the young man's father was, like himself, one of the old Macedonian stock; he had seen his daughter's lover grow to manhood, and there was not in the city a youth he could more heartily welcome. This he freely admitted; he only regretted that when she should set up house with her husband on the other side of the lake, he (Heron) would be left as lonely as a statue on its pedestal. His sons had already begun to avoid him like a leper!

Then, when he heard of what had befallen Diodoros, and Melissa went on to say that the people who had thrown the stone at the dog were Christians, and that they had carried the wounded youth into a large, clean dwelling, where he was being carefully attended when she had left him, Heron broke out into violent abuse. They were unpatriotic worshipers of a crucified Jew, who multiplied like vermin, and only wanted to turn the good old order of things upside down. But this time they should see—the hypocrites, who pretended to so much humanity, and then set ferocious dogs on peaceful folk!—they should learn that they could not fall on a Macedonian citizen without paying for it.

He indignantly refused to hear Melissa's assurance that none of the Christians had set the dog on her lover; she, however, maintained stoutly that it was merely by an unfortunate accident that the

stone had hit Diodoros and cut his head so badly. She would not have quitted her lover but that she feared lest her prolonged absence should have alarmed her father.

Heron at last stood still for a minute or two, lost in thought, and then brought out of his chest a casket, from which he took a few engraved gems. He held them carefully up to the light, and asked his daughter: "If I learn from Polybius, to whom I am now going, that they have already caught Alexander, should I venture now, do you think, to offer a couple of choice gems to Titianus, the prefect, to set him free again? He knows what is good, and the captain of the watch is his subordinate."

But Melissa besought him to give up the idea of seeking out Alexander in his hiding-place; for Heron, the gem-cutter, was known to every one, and if a man-at-arms should see him he would certainly follow him. As regarded the prefect, he would not apprehend any one this day, for, as her father knew, Cæsar was to arrive at Alexandria at noon, and Titianus must be on the spot to meet him with all his train.

"But if you want to be out of doors and doing," she added, "go to see Philip. Bring him to reason, and discuss with him what is to be done."

She spoke with firm decision, and Heron looked with amazement at the giver of this counsel. Melissa had hitherto cared for his comfort in silence, without expressing any opinions of her own, and submitting to be the lightning-conductor for all his evil tempers. He did not rate her girlish beauty very high, for there were no ugly faces in his family nor in that of his deceased Olympias. And all the other consolations she offered him he took as a

matter of course—nay, he sometimes made them a ground of complaint; for he would occasionally fancy that she wanted to assume the place of his beloved lost wife, and he regarded it as a duty to her to show his daughter, and often very harshly and unkindly, how far she was from filling her mother's place.

Thus she had accustomed herself to do her duty as a daughter, with quiet and wordless exactitude, looking for no thanks; while he thought he was doing her a kindness merely by suffering her constant presence. That he should ever exchange ideas with his daughter, or ask her opinion, would have seemed to Heron absolutely impossible; yet it had come to this, and for the second time this morning he looked in her face with utter amazement.

He could not but approve her warning not to betray Alexander's hiding-place, and her suggestion that he should go to see his eldest son coincided with an unspoken desire which had been lurking in his mind ever since she had told him of her having seen a disembodied soul. The possibility of seeing her once more, whose memory was dearer to him than all else on earth, had such a charm, that it moved him more deeply than the danger of his son, who was, nevertheless, very dear to his strangely tempered heart.

So he answered Melissa coolly, as if he were telling her of a decision already formed:

"Of course! I meant to see Philip too; only—" and he paused, for anxiety about Alexander again came to the front—"I can not bear to remain in such uncertainty about the boy."

At this instant the door opened. The new-comer was Andreas, the man to whom Diodoros had ad-

vised Alexander to apply for protection and counsel ; and Melissa greeted him with filial affection.

He was a freedman in her lover's family, and was the steward and manager of his master's extensive gardens and lands, which were under his absolute control. No one could have imagined that this man had ever been a slave ; his face was swarthy, but his fine black eyes lighted it up with a glance of firm self-reliance and fiery energy. It was the look of a man who might be the moving spirit of one of those rebellions which were frequent in Alexandria ; there was an imperious ring in his voice, and decision in the swift gestures of his hardened but shapely hands.

For twenty years, indeed, he had ruled over the numerous slaves of Polybius, who was an easy-going master, and an invalid from gout in his feet. He was at this time a victim to a fresh attack, and had therefore sent his confidential steward into the town to tell Heron that he approved of his son's choice, and that he would protect Alexander from pursuit.

All this Andreas communicated in few and business-like words ; but he then turned to Melissa, and said, in a tone of kindly and affectionate familiarity : " Polybius also wishes to know how your lover is being cared for by the Christians, and from hence I am going on to see our sick boy."

" Then ask your friends," the gem-cutter broke in, " to keep less ferocious dogs for the future."

" That," replied the freedman, " will be unnecessary, for it is not likely that the fierce brute belongs to the community whose friendship I am proud to claim ; and, if it does, they will be as much grieved over the matter as we can be."

" A Christian would never do another an ill turn !" said Heron, with a shrug.

" Never, so far as justice permits," replied An-



dreas, decisively. Then he inquired whether Heron had any message or news to send to his son; and when the gem-cutter replied that he had not, the freedman was about to go. Melissa, however, detained him, saying:

"I will go with you if you will allow me."

"And I?" said Heron, irritably. "It seems to me that children are learning to care less and less what their fathers' views and requirements may be. I have to go to Philip. Who knows what may happen in my absence? Besides—no offense to you, Andreas—what concern has my daughter among the Christians?"

"To visit her lover," replied Andreas, sharply. And he added, more quietly: "It will be a pleasure to me to escort her; and your Argutis is a faithful fellow, and in case of need would be of more use here than an inexperienced girl. I see no reasonable ground for detaining her, Heron. I should like afterwards to take her home with me, across the lake; it would be a comfort to Polybius and soothe his pain to have his favorite with him, his future daughter.—Get ready, my child."

The artist had listened with growing anger, and a swift surge of rage made him long to give the freedman a sharp lesson. But when his glaring eye met the Christian's steady, grave gaze, he controlled himself, and only said, with a shrug which sufficiently expressed his feeling that he was surrendering his veto against his better judgment, addressing himself to Melissa and ignoring Andreas:

"You are betrothed, and of age. Go, for aught I care, in obedience to him whose wishes evidently outweigh mine. Polybius's son is your master henceforth."

He folded his mantle, and when the girl hastened

to help him he allowed her to do it; but he went on, to the freedman: "And for aught I care, you may take her across the lake, too. It is natural that Polybius should wish to see his future daughter. But one thing I may ask for myself: You have slaves and to spare; if anything happens to Alexander, let me hear of it at once."

He kissed Melissa on the head, nodded patronizingly to Andreas, and left the house.

His soft-hearted devotion to a vision had weakened his combativeness; still, he would have yielded less readily to a man who had once been a slave, but that the invitation to Melissa released him of her presence for a while.

He was not, indeed, afraid of his daughter; but she need not know that he wanted Philip to make him acquainted with Serapion, and that through his mediation he hoped at least to see the spirit of the wife he mourned. When he was fairly out of the house he smiled with satisfaction like a school-boy who had escaped his master.

## CHAPTER VII.

MELISSA, too, had a sense of freedom when she found herself walking by the side of Andreas.

In the garden of Hermes, where her father's house stood, there were few signs of the excitement with which the citizens awaited Cæsar's arrival. Most of those who were out and about were going in the opposite direction; they meant to await the grand reception of Caracalla at the eastern end of the city, on his way from the Kanopic Gate to the Gate of the Sun. Still, a good many—men, women and children—were, like themselves, walking westward, for it was known that Cæsar would alight at the Serapeum.

They had scarcely left the house when Andreas asked the girl whether she had a kerchief or a veil in the basket the slave was carrying behind her; and on her replying in the affirmative, he expressed his satisfaction; for Caracalla's soldiery, in consequence of the sovereign's weakened discipline and reckless liberality, were little better than an unbridled rabble.

"Then let us keep out of their way," urged Melissa.

"Certainly, as much as possible," said her companion. "At any rate, let us hurry, so as to get back to the lake before the crowd stops the way. You have passed an eventful and anxious night, my child, and are tired, no doubt."

"Oh, no!" said she, calmly; "I had some wine to refresh me, and some food with the Christians."

"Then they received you kindly?"

"The only woman there nursed Diodoros like a mother; and the men were considerate and careful. My father does not know them; and yet— Well, you know how much he dislikes them."

"He follows the multitude," returned Andreas, "the common herd, who hate everything exceptional, everything that disturbs their round of life, or startles them out of the quietude of their dull dreams. Woe to those who call by its true name what those blind souls call pleasure and enjoyment as serving to hasten the flight of time—not too long at the most; woe to those who dare raise even a finger against it!"

The man's deep, subdued tones were strongly expressive of the wrath within him; and the girl, who kept close to his side, asked with eager anxiety, "Then my father was right when he said that you are a member of the Christian body?"

"Yes," he replied, emphatically; and when Melissa curiously inquired whether it were true that the followers of the crucified God had renounced their love for home and country, which yet ought to be dear to every true man, Andreas answered with a superior smile, that even the founder of the Stoa had required not only of his fellow-Greeks but of all human beings, that they should regulate their existence by the same laws, since they were brethren in reason and sense.

"He was right," added Andreas, more earnestly, "and I tell you, child, the time is not far off when men shall no longer speak of Roman and Greek, of Egyptian and Syrian, of free men and slaves; when there shall be but one native land, but one

class of life for all. Yea, the day is beginning to dawn even now. The fullness of the time is come!"

Melissa looked up at him in amazement, exclaiming: "How strange! I have heard those words once to-day already, and can not get them out of my head. Nay, when you confirmed my father's report, I made up my mind to ask you to explain them."

"What words?" asked Andreas, in surprise.

"The fullness of the time is come."

"And where did you hear them?"

"In the house where Diodoros and I took refuge from Zminis."

"A Christian meeting-house," replied Andreas, and his expressive face darkened. "But those who assemble there are aliens to me; they follow evil heresies. But never mind—they also call themselves Christians, and the words which led you to ponder, stand to me at the very gate of the doctrine of our divine master, like the obelisks before the door of an Egyptian temple. Paul, the great preacher of the faith, wrote them to the Galatians. They are easy to understand; nay, any one who looks about him with his eyes open, or searches his own soul, can scarcely fail to see their meaning, if only the desire is roused in him for something better than what these cursed times can give us who live in them."

"Then it means that we are on the eve of great changes?"

"Yes!" cried Andreas, "only the word you use is too feeble. The old dull sun must set, to rise again with greater glory."

Ill at ease, and by no means convinced, Melissa looked her excited companion in the face as she replied:

"Of course I know, Andreas, that you speak figuratively, for the sun which lights the day seems

to me bright enough ; and is not everything flourishing in this gay, busy city ? Are not its citizens under the protection of the law ? Were the gods ever more zealously worshiped ? Is my father wrong when he says that it is a proud thing to belong to the mightiest realm on earth, before whose power barbarians tremble ; a great thing to feel and call yourself a Roman citizen ? ”

So far Andreas had listened to her with composure, but he here interrupted, in a tone of scorn :

“ Oh, yes ! Cæsar has made your father, and your neighbor Skopas, and every free man in the country a Roman citizen ; but it is a pity that, while he gave each man his patent of citizenship, he should have filched the money out of his purse. ”

“ Apion, the dealer, was saying something to that effect the other day, and I dare say it is true. But I can not be persuaded against the evidence of my own eyes, and they light on many good and pleasant things. If only you had been with us to the Nekropolis yesterday ! Every man was honoring the gods after his own manner. Some, indeed, were grave enough ; still, cheerfulness won the day among the people. Most of them were full of the god. I myself, who generally live so quietly, was infected as the mystics came back from Eleusis, and we joined their ranks. ”

“ Till the spy Zminis spoiled your happiness and imperiled your brother’s life for a careless speech. ”

“ Very true ! ”

“ And what your brother heedlessly proclaimed, ” Andreas went on, with flashing eyes, “ the very sparrows twitter on the house-tops. It is the truth. The sovereign of the Roman Empire is a thousand

times a murderer. Some he sent to precede his own brother, and they were followed by all—twenty thousand, it is said—who were attached to the hapless Geta, or who even spoke his name. This is the lord and master to whom we owe obedience—whom God has set over us for our sins. And when this wretch in the purple shall close his eyes, he, like the rest of the criminals who have preceded him on the throne, will be proclaimed a god! A noble company! When your beloved mother died I heard you, even you, revile the gods for their cruelty; others call them kind. It is only a question of how they accept the blood of the sacrificed beasts, their own creatures, which you shed in their honor. If Serapis does not grant some fool the thing he asks, then he turns to the altar of Isis, of Anubis, of Zeus, of Demeter. At last he cries to Sabazios, or one of the new deities of Olympus, who owe their existence to the decisions of the Roman Senate, and who are for the most part scoundrels and villains. There certainly never were more gods than there are now; and among those of whom the myths tell us things strange enough to bring those who worship them into contempt, or to the gallows, is the countless swarm of good and evil daimons. Away with your Olympians! They ought to reward virtue and punish vice; and they are no better than corruptible judges; for you know beforehand just what and how much will avail to purchase their favors.”

“You paint with dark colors,” the girl broke in. “I have learned from Philip that the Pythagoreans teach that not the sacrifice, but the spirit of the offering, is what really matters.”

“Quite right. He was thinking, no doubt, of the miracle-monger of Tyana, Apollonius, who cer-

tainly had heard of the doctrine of the Redeemer. But among the thousand nine hundred and ninety who here bring beasts to the altar, who ever remembers this? Quite lately I heard one of our garden laborers ask how much a day he ought to sacrifice to the sun, his god. I told him a keration—for that is what the poor creature earns for a whole day's work. He thought that too much, for he must live; so the god must be content with a tithe, for the taxes to the State on his earnings were hardly more."

"The divinity ought no doubt to be above all else to us," Melissa observed. "But when your laborer worships the sun, and looks for its benefits, what is the difference between him and you, or me, or any of us, though we call the sun Helios or Serapis, or what not?"

"Yes, yes," replied Andreas. "The sun is adored here under many different names and forms, and your Serapis has swallowed up not only Zeus and Pluto, but Phœbus Apollo and the Egyptian Osiris and Ammon, and Ra, to swell his own importance. But to be serious, child, our fathers made to themselves many gods indeed, of the sublime phenomena and powers of Nature, and worshiped them admiringly; but to us only the names remain, and those who offer to Apollo never think of the sun. With my laborer, who is an Arab, it is different. He believes the light-giving globe itself to be a god; and you, I perceive, do not think him wholly wrong. But when you see a youth throw the discus with splendid strength, do you praise the discus, or the thrower?"

"The thrower," replied Melissa. "But Phœbus Apollo himself guides his chariot with his divine hands."



"And astronomers," the Christian went on, "can calculate for years to come exactly where his steeds will be at each minute of the time. So no one can be more completely a slave than he to whom so many mortals pray that he will, of his own free-will, guide circumstances to suit them. I, therefore, regard the sun as a star, like any other star; and worship should be given, not to those rolling spheres moving across the sky in prescribed paths, but to Him who created them and guides them by fixed laws. I really pity your Apollo and the whole host of the Olympian gods, since the world has become possessed by the mad idea that the gods and daemons may be moved, or even compelled, by forms of prayer and sacrifices and magic arts, to grant to each worshiper the particular thing on which he may have set his covetous and changeable fancy."

"And yet," exclaimed Melissa, "you yourself told me that you prayed for my mother when the leech saw no further hope. Every one hopes for a miracle from the immortals when his own power has come to an end! Thousands think so. And in our city the people have never been more religious than they are now. The singer of the Ialemos at the feast of Adonis particularly praised us for it."

"Because they have never been more fervently addicted to pleasure, and therefore have never more deeply dreaded the terrors of hades. The great and splendid Zeus of the Greeks has been transformed into Serapis here, on the banks of the Nile, and has become a god of the nether world. Most of the ceremonies and mysteries to which the people crowd are connected with death. They hope that the folly over which they waste so many hours

will smooth their way to the fields of the blest, and yet they themselves close the road by the pleasures they indulge in. But the fullness of time is now come; the straight road lies open to all mankind, called as they are to a higher life in a new world; and he who follows it may await death as gladly as the bride awaits the bridegroom on her marriage day. Yes, I prayed to my God for your dying mother, the sweetest and best of women. But what I asked for her was not that her life might be preserved, or that she might be permitted to linger longer among us, but that the next world might be opened to her in all its glory."

At this point the speaker was interrupted by an armed troop which thrust the crowd aside to make way for the steers which were to be slaughtered in the Temple of Serapis at the approach of Cæsar. There were several hundred of them, each with a garland about its neck, and the handsomest which led the train had its horns gilded.

When the road was clear again, Andreas pointed to the beasts, and whispered to his companion: "Their blood will be shed in honor of the future god Caracalla. He once killed a hundred bears in the arena with his own hand. But I tell you, child, when the fullness of time is come, innocent blood shall no more be shed. You were speaking with enthusiasm of the splendor of the Roman Empire. But, like certain fruit-trees in our garden which we manure with blood, it has grown great on blood, on the life-juice of its victims. The mightiest realm on earth owes its power to murder and rapine; but now sudden destruction is coming on the insatiate city, and visitation for her sins."

"And if you are right—if the barbarians should indeed destroy the armies of Cæsar," asked Melissa,

looking up in some alarm at the enthusiast, "what then?"

"Then we may thank those who help to demolish the crumbling house!" cried Andreas, with flashing eyes.

"And if it should be so," said the girl, with tremulous anxiety, "what universal ruin! What is there on earth that could fill its place? If the empire falls into the power of the barbarians, Rome will be made desolate, and all the provinces laid waste which thrive under her protection."

"Then," said Andreas, "will the kingdom of the Spirit arise, in which peace and love shall reign instead of hatred and murder and wars. There shall be one fold and one Shepherd, and the least shall be equal with the greatest."

"Then there will be no more slaves?" asked Melissa, in growing amazement.

"Not one," replied her companion, and a gleam of inspiration seemed to light up his stern features. "All shall be free, and all united in love by the grace of Him who hath redeemed us."

But Melissa shook her head, and Andreas, understanding what was passing in her mind, tried to catch her eye as he went on:

"You think that these are the impossible wishes of one who has himself been a slave, or that it is the remembrance of past suffering and unutterable wrong which speaks in me? For what right-minded man would not desire to preserve others from the misery which once crushed him to earth with its bitter burden?—But you are mistaken. Thousands of free-born men and women think as I do, for to them, too, a higher Power has revealed that the fullness of time is now come. He, the Greatest and Best, who made all the woes of the world His own,

has chosen the poor rather than the rich, the suffering rather than the happy, the babes rather than the wise and prudent ; and in his kingdom the last shall be first—yea, the least of the last, the poorest of the poor ; and they, child, are the slaves.”

He ended his diatribe with a deep sigh, but Melissa pressed the hand which held hers as they walked along the raised pathway, and said : “ Poor Andreas ! How much you must have gone through before Polybius set you free ! ”

He only nodded, and they both remained silent till they found themselves in a quiet side street. Then the girl looked up at him inquiringly, and began again :

“ And now you hope for a second Spartacus ? Or will you yourself lead a rebellion of the slaves ? You are the man for it, and I can be secret.”

“ If it has to be, why not ? ” he replied, and his eyes sparkled with a strange fire. But seeing that she shrank from him, a smile passed over his countenance, and he added in a soothing tone : “ Do not be alarmed, my child ; what must come will come, without another Spartacus, or bloodshed, or turmoil. And you, with your clear eyes and your kind heart, would you find it difficult to distinguish right from wrong, and to feel for the sorrows of others ? Yes, perhaps ! For what will not custom excuse and sanctify ? You can pity the bird which is shut into a cage too small for it, or the mule which breaks down under too heavy a load, and the cruelty which hurts them rouses your indignation. But for the man whom a terrible fate has robbed of his freedom, often through the fault of another, whose soul endures even greater torments than his despised body, you have no better comfort than the advice which might indeed serve a philosopher, but

which to him is bitter mockery : to bear his woes with patience. He is only a slave, bought, or perhaps inherited. Which of you ever thinks of asking who gave you, who are free, the right to enslave half of all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, and to rob them of the highest prerogative of humanity? I know that many philosophers have spoken of slavery as an injustice done by the strong to the weak : but they shrugged their shoulders over it nevertheless, and excused it as an inevitable evil ; for, thought they, who will serve me if my slave is regarded as my equal? You only smile at this confusion of the meditative recluses, but you forget"—and a sinister fire glowed in his eyes—"that the slave, too, has a soul, in which the same feelings stir as in your own. You never think how a proud man may feel whose arm you brand, and whose very breath of life is indignity ; or what a slave thinks who is spurned by his master's foot, though noble blood may run in his veins. All living things, even the plants in the garden, have a right to happiness, and only develop fully in freedom, and under loving care ; and yet one half of mankind robs the other half of this right. The sum total of suffering and sorrow to which Fate had doomed the race is recklessly multiplied and increased by the guilt of men themselves. But the cry of the poor and wretched has gone up to heaven, and now that the fullness of time is come, 'Thus far, and no farther,' is the word. No wild revolutionary has been endowed with a giant's strength to burst the bonds of the victims asunder. No, the Creator and Preserver of the world sent his Son to redeem the poor in spirit, and, above all, the brethren and the sisters who are weary and heavy laden. The magical word which shall break

the bars of the prisons where the chains of the slaves are heard is Love. . . . But you, Melissa, can but half comprehend all this," he added, interrupting the ardent flow of his enthusiastic speech. "You can not understand it all. For you, too, child, the fullness of time is coming; for you, too, free-born though you are, are, I know, one of the heavy laden who patiently suffer the burden laid upon you. You too— But keep close to me; we shall find it difficult to get through this throng."

It was, in fact, no easy matter to get across the crowd which was pouring noisily down the street of Hermes, into which this narrow way led. However, they achieved it, and when Melissa had recovered her breath in a quiet lane in Rhakotis, she turned to her companion again with the question, "And when do you suppose that your predictions will be fulfilled?"

"As soon as the breeze blows which shall shake the overripe fruit from the tree. It may be to-morrow, or not yet, according to the long-suffering of the Most High. But the entire collapse of the world in which we have been living is as certain to come as that you are walking here with me!"

Melissa walked on with a quaking heart, as she heard her friend's tone of conviction; he, however, was aware that the inmost meaning of his words was sealed to her. To his inquiry, whether she could not rejoice in the coming of the glorious time in store for redeemed humanity, she answered, tremulously:

"All you hope for is glorious, no doubt, but what shall lead to it must be a terror to all. Were you told of the kingdom of which you speak by an oracle, or is it only a picture drawn by your im-

agination, a vision, and the offspring of your soul's desire?"

"Neither," said Andreas, decidedly; and he went on in a louder voice: "I know it by revelation. Believe me, child, it is as certainly true as that the sun will set this night. The gates of the heavenly Jerusalem stand open, and if you, too, would fain be blessed— But more of this later. Here we are at our journey's end."

They entered the Christian home, where they found Diodoros, on a comfortable couch, in a spacious, shady room, and in the care of a friendly matron.

But he was in an evil case. The surgeon thought his wound a serious one; for the heavy stone which had hit him had injured the skull, and the unhappy youth was trembling with fever. His head was burning, and it was with difficulty that he spoke a few coherent words. But his eyes betrayed that he recognized Melissa, and that it was a joy to him to see her again; and when he was told that Alexander had so far escaped, a bright look lighted up his countenance. It was evidently a comfort to him to gaze on Melissa's pretty face; her hand lay in his, and he understood her when she greeted him from her father, and spoke to him of various matters; but the lids ere long closed over his aching eyes.

Melissa felt that she must leave him to rest. She gently released his hand from her grasp and laid it across his breast, and moved no more, excepting to wipe the drops from his brow. Solemn stillness had reigned for some time in the large, clean house, faintly smelling of lavender; but, on a sudden, doors opened and shut; steps were heard in the anteroom, seats were moved, and a loud con-

fusion of men's voices became audible, among them that of Andreas.

Melissa listened anxiously to the heated discussion which had already become a vehement quarrel. She longed to implore the excited wranglers to moderate their tones, for she could see by her lover's quivering lips that the noise hurt him; but she could not leave him.

The dispute meanwhile grew louder and louder. The names of Montanus and Tertullian, Clemens and Origen, fell on her ear, and at last she heard Andreas exclaim in high wrath: "You are like the guests at a richly furnished banquet who ask, after they have well eaten, when the meat will be brought in. Paraclete is come, and yet you look for another."

He was not allowed to proceed; fierce and scornful contradiction checked his speech, till a voice of thunder was heard above the rest:

"The heavenly Jerusalem is at hand. He who denies and doubts the calling of Montanus is worse than the heathen, and I, for one, cast him off as neither a brother nor a Christian!"

This furious denunciation was drowned in uproar; the anxious girl heard seats overturned, and the yells and shouts of furious combatants; the suffering youth meanwhile moaned with anguish, and an expression of acute pain was stamped on his handsome features. Melissa could bear it no longer; she had risen to go and entreat the men to make less noise, when suddenly all was still.

Diodoros immediately became calmer, and looked up at the girl as gratefully as though the soothing silence were owing to her. She could now hear the deep tones of the head of the Church of Alexandria, and understood that the matter in hand was



the readmission into this congregation of a man who had been turned out by some other sect. Some would have him rejected, and commended him to the mercy of God; others, less rigid, were willing to receive him, since he was ready to submit to any penance.

Then the quarrel began again. High above every other voice rose the shrill tones of a man who had just arrived from Carthage, and who boasted of personal friendship with the venerable Tertullian. The listening girl could no longer follow the connection of the discussion, but the same names again met her ear; and, though she understood nothing of the matter, it annoyed her, because the turmoil disturbed her lover's rest.

It was not till the sick-nurse came back that the tumult was appeased; for, as soon as she learned how seriously the loud disputes of her fellow-believers were disturbing the sick man's rest, she interfered so effectually, that the house was as silent as before.

The deaconess Katharine was the name by which she was known, and in a few minutes she returned to her patient's bedside.

Andreas followed her, with the leech, a man of middle height, whose shrewd and well-formed head, bald but for a little hair at the sides, was set on a somewhat ungainly body. His sharp eyes looked hither and thither, and there was something jerky in his quick movements; still, their grave decisiveness made up for the lack of grace. He paid no heed to the bystanders, but threw himself forward rather than bent over the patient, felt him, and with a light hand renewed his bandages; and then he looked round the room, examining it as curiously as though he proposed to take

up his abode there, ending by fixing his prominent, round eyes on Melissa. There was something so ruthlessly inquisitive in that look that it might, under other circumstances, have angered her. However, as it was, she submitted to it, for she saw that it was shrewd, and she would have called the wisest physician on earth to her lover's bedside if she had had the power.

When Ptolemæus—for so he was called—had, in reply to the question, "who is that?" learned who she was, he hastily murmured: "Then she can do nothing but harm here. A man in a fever wants but one thing, and that is perfect quiet."

And he beckoned Andreas to the window, and asked him shortly, "Has the girl any sense?"

"Plenty," replied the freedman, decisively.

"As much, at any rate, as she can have at her age," the other retorted. "Then it is to be hoped that she will go without any leave-taking or tears. That fine lad is in a bad way. I have known all along what might do him good, but I dare not attempt it alone, and there is no one in Alexandria. . . . But Galen has come to join Cæsar. If he, old as he is— But it is not for the likes of us to intrude into Cæsar's quarters— Still—"

He paused, laying his hand on his brow, and rubbing it thoughtfully with his short middle finger. Then he suddenly exclaimed: "The old man would never come here. But the Serapeum, where the sick lie awaiting divine or diabolical counsel in dreams—Galen will go there. If only we could carry the boy thither."

"His nurse here would hardly allow that," said Andreas, doubtfully.

"He is a heathen," replied the leech, hotly. "Besides, what has faith to do with the injury to the

body? How many Cæsars have employed Egyptian and Jewish physicians? The lad would get the treatment he needs, and, Christian as I am, I would, if necessary, convey him to the Serapeum, though it is of all heathen temples the most heathen. I will find out by hook or by crook at what time Galen is to visit the cubicles. To-morrow, or next day at latest; and to-night, or, better still, to-morrow morning before sunrise, I will have the youth carried there. If the deaconess refuses—"

"And she will," Andreas put in.

"Very well.—Come here, maiden," he beckoned to Melissa, and went on loud enough for the deaconess to hear: "If we can get your betrothed to the Serapeum early to-morrow, he may probably be cured; otherwise I refuse to be responsible. Tell your friends and his that I will be here before sunrise to-morrow, and that they must provide a covered litter and good bearers."

He then turned to the deaconess, who had followed him in silence, with her hands clasped like a deserter, laid his broad, square hand on her shoulder, and added:

"So it must be, Widow Katharine. Love endures and suffers all things, and to save a neighbor's life, it is well to suffer in silence even things that displease us. I will explain it all to you afterwards. Quiet, only perfect quiet—No melancholy leave-taking, child! The sooner you are out of the house the better."

He went back again to the bed, laid his hand for a moment on the sick man's forehead, and then left the room.

Diodoros lay still and indifferent on the couch. Melissa kissed him on the brow, and withdrew without his observing it, her eyes full of tears.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE sun had passed the meridian when Melissa and Andreas left the house. They walked on in silence through the deserted streets, the girl with her eyes sadly fixed on the ground; for an inward voice warned her that her lover's life was in danger. She did not sob, but more than once she wiped away a large tear.

Andreas, too, was lost in his own thoughts. To win a soul to the Saviour was surely a good work. He knew Melissa's sober, thoughtful nature, and the retired, joyless life she led with her surly old father. So his knowledge of human nature led him to think that she, if any one, might easily be won over to the faith in which he found his chief happiness. Baptism had given such sanctification to his life that he longed to lead the daughter of the only woman for whom his heart had ever beat a shade faster, to the baptismal font. In the heat of summer Olympias had often been the guest for weeks together of Polybius's wife, now likewise dead. Then she had taken a little house of her own for herself and her children, and when his master's wife died, the lonely widower had known no greater pleasure than that of receiving her on his estate for as long as Heron would allow her to remain; he himself never left his work for long. Thus Andreas had become the great ally of the gem-cutter's children,

and, as they could learn nothing from him that was not good and worth knowing, Olympias had gladly allowed them to remain in his society, and herself found a teacher and friend in the worthy steward. She knew that Andreas had joined the Christians; she had made him tell her much about his faith; still, as the daughter and wife of artists, she was firmly attached to the old gods, and could only regard the Christian doctrine as a new system of philosophy in which many things attracted her, but many, on the other hand, repelled her. At that time his passion for Melissa's mother had possessed him so wholly that his life was a constant struggle against the temptation to covet his neighbor's wife. And he had conquered, doing severe penance for every glance which might for an instant betray to her the weakness of his soul. She had loved flowers, and he knew the plant-world so well, and was so absolutely master over everything which grew and bloomed in the gardens of which he had charge, that he could often intrust his speechless favorites to tell her things which lips and eyes might not reveal. Now she was no more, and the culture of plants had lost half its charm since her eyes could no longer watch their thriving. He now left the gardens for the most part to his men, while he devoted himself to other cares with double diligence, and to the strictest exercises of his faith.

But, as many a man adores the children of the woman he might not marry, Alexander and Melissa daily grew dearer to Andreas. He took a father's interest in their welfare, and, needing little himself, he carefully hoarded his ample income to promote the cause of Christianity and encourage good works; but he had paid Alexander's debts when his time

of apprenticeship was over, for they were so considerable that the reckless youth had not dared confess the sum to his stern father.

Very soon after this, Alexander had become one of the most popular painters of the town; and when he proposed to repay his friend the money he had lent him, Andreas accepted it; but he added it to a capital of which the purpose was his secret, but which, if his prayers were heard, might return once more to benefit Alexander. Diodoros, too, was as dear to the freedman as a son of his own could have been, though he was a heathen. In the gymnasium and the race-course, or in the practice of the mysteries, the good seed which he sowed in the lad's heart was trodden down. Polybius, too, was an utter heathen; indeed, he was one of the priests of Dionysos and Demeter, as his wealth and position in the senate required.

Then, Diodoros had confessed to him that he hoped to win Melissa for his wife, and this had been adverse to Andreas's hope and purpose of making a Christian of the girl; for he knew by experience how easily married happiness was wrecked when man and wife worship different gods. But when the freedman had again seen the gem-cutter's brutality and the girl's filial patience, an inward voice had called to him that this gentle, gifted creature was one of those elect from among whom the Lord chose the martyrs for the faith; and that it was his part to lead her into the fold of the Redeemer. He had begun the work of converting her with the zeal he put into everything. But fresh doubts had come upon him on the threshold of the sick-room, after seeing the lad who was so dear to him, and whose eye had met his with such a trustful, suffering look. Could it be right to sow the seed of dis-

cord between him and his future wife? And supposing Diodoros, too, should be converted by Melissa, could he thus alienate from his father the son and heir of Polybius—his benefactor and master?

Then, he remembered, too, to what a position he had risen through that master's confidence in him. Polybius knew nothing of the concerns of his house but from the reports laid before him by Andreas; for the steward controlled not merely the estate but the fortune of the family, and for years had been at the head of the bank which he himself had founded to increase the already vast income of the man to whom he owed his freedom. Polybius paid him a considerable portion of each year's profits, and had said one day at a banquet, with the epigrammatic wit of an Alexandrian, that his freedman, Andreas, served his interests as only one other man could do—namely, himself—but with the industry of ten. The Christian greatly appreciated his confidence; and as he walked on by the side of Melissa, he told himself again and again that it would be dishonorable to betray it.

If only the sweet girl might find the way alone! If she were chosen to salvation, the Lord himself would lead and guide her. Had he indeed not beckoned her already by impressing on her heart those words, "The fullness of the time is now come?"

That he was justified in keeping this remembrance alive he had no doubt; and he was about to speak of it again, when she prevented him by raising her large eyes beseechingly to his, and asking him:

"Is Diodoros in real danger? Tell me the truth. I would rather endure the worst than this dreadful anxiety."

So Andreas acknowledged that the youth was in a bad way, but that Ptolemæus, himself well-skilled, hoped to cure him if his greater colleague Galenus would aid him.

"And it is to secure his assistance, then," Melissa went on, "that the leech would have him carried to the Serapeum?"

"Yes, my child. For he is in Cæsar's train, and it would be vain to try to speak with him to-day or to-morrow."

"But the journey through the town will do the sufferer a mischief."

"He will be carried in a litter."

"But even that is not good for him. Perfect quiet, Ptolemæus said, was the best medicine."

"But Galenus has even better remedies at hand," was the reply.

Melissa seemed satisfied with this assurance, for she walked on for some time in silence. But when the uproar of the crowd in the vicinity of the Serapeum became more audible as they advanced, she suddenly stood still, and said:

"Come what may, I will find my way to the great physician's presence and crave his help."

"You?" cried the freedman; and when she firmly reiterated her purpose, the strong man turned pale.

"You know not what you say!" he exclaimed, in deep concern. "The men who guard the approaches to Caracalla are ruthless profligates, devoid of courtesy or conscience. But, you may rely upon it, you will not even get into the antechamber."

"Perhaps. Nevertheless, it is my duty, and I will try."

How firmly and decisively she spoke! And what



strength of will sparkled in the quiet, modest maiden's eyes! And the closely set lips, which usually were slightly parted, and hardly covered two of her pearly white teeth, gave her a look of such determination, that Andreas could see that no obstacle would check her.

Still, love and duty alike required him to use every means in his power to keep her from taking such a step. He lavished all his eloquence; but she adhered to her purpose with steadfast persistency, and none of the reasons he could adduce to prove the impossibility of the undertaking convinced her. The only point which staggered her was the information that the great leech was an old man, who walked with difficulty; and that Galen, as a heathen and a disciple of Aristotle, would never be induced to enter a Christian dwelling. Both these facts might be a serious hindrance to her scheme; yet she would not now stop to reflect. They had got back to the great street of Hermes, leading from the temple of that god to the Serapeum, and must cross it to reach the lake, their immediate destination. As in all the principal streets of Alexandria, a colonnade bordered the street in front of the houses on each side of the wide and handsome roadway. Under these arcades the foot-passengers were closely packed, awaiting Cæsar's passage. He must soon be coming, for the reception, first at the Kanopic Gate, and then at the Gate of the Sun, was long since over; and, even if he had carried out his purpose of halting at the tomb of Alexander the Great, he could not be detained much longer. The distance hither down the Kanopic Way was not great, and swift horses would quickly bring him down the Aspendia street to that of Hermes, leading straight to the Serapeum. His train was not

to follow him to the Soma, the mausoleum of the founder of the city, but to turn off to the southward by the Paneum, and make a round into the street of Hermes.

The prætorians, the German body-guard, the imperial Macedonian phalanx, and some mounted standard-bearers had by this time reached the spot where Melissa was proceeding up the street holding Andreas's hand. Close by them came also a train of slaves, carrying baskets full of palm-leaves and fresh branches of ivy, myrtle, poplar, and pine, from the gardens of the Paneum, to be carried to the Serapeum. They were escorted by lictors, endeavoring with their axes and fasces to make a way for them through the living wall which barred their way.

By the help of the mounted troops, who kept the main road clear, space was made for them; and Andreas, who knew one of the overseers of the garden-slaves, begged him as a favor to allow Melissa and himself to walk among his people. This was willingly granted to so well-known a man; and the way was quite free for the moment, because the imperial *cortège* had not followed immediately on the soldiers who had now all marched past. Thus, among the flower-bearers, they reached the middle of the street; and while the slaves proceeded on their way to the Serapeum, the freedman tried to cross the road, and reach the continuation of the street they had come by, and which led to the lake. But the attempt was frustrated, for some Roman lictors who had just come up stood in their way, and sent them to the southern side of the street of Hermes, to mingle with the gaping crowd under the arcade.

They were, of course, but ill received by these,

since they naturally found themselves in front of the foremost rank; but the stalwart frame and determined face of Andreas, and the exceptional beauty of his young companion, over whose pretty head most of the gazers could easily see, protected her from rough treatment.

Andreas spoke a few words of apology to those standing nearest to them, and a young goldsmith at once courteously made way, so that Melissa, who had taken a place behind a column, might see better.

And in a few minutes there was that to see which made every one forget the intruders. Vehicles and outriders, litters swung between mules, and a long train of imperial footmen, in red tunics embroidered with gold, huntsmen with leashes of noble dogs, baggage-wagons and loaded elephants, came trooping down toward the Serapeum; while suddenly, from the Aspendia into the Hermes Way, the Numidian horse rushed out, followed by a troop of mounted lictors, who galloped up the street, shouting their orders in loud tones to the imperial train, in a mixture of Latin and Greek, of which Melissa understood only the words "Cæsar!" and "Make way to the right!"

The command was instantly obeyed. Vehicles, foot-passengers, and riders alike crowded to the southern or left-hand side of the road, and the many-headed throng, of which Andreas and Melissa formed a part, drew as far back as possible under the colonnade; for on the edge of the footway there was the risk of being trampled on by a horse or crushed by a wheel. The back rows of the populace, who had collected under the arcades, were severely squeezed by this fresh pressure from without, and their outcries were loud of anger, alarm,

or pain; while on the other side of the street arose shouts of delight and triumph, or, when anything singular came into view, loud laughter at the wit and irony of some jester. Added to these there were the clatter of hoofs and the roll of wheels, the whinnying of horses, the shouts of command, the rattle of drums, the blare of trumpets, and the shrill pipe of flutes, without a moment's pause. It was a wild and ear-splitting tumult; to Melissa, however, neither painful nor pleasing, for the one idea, that she must speak with the great physician, silenced every other. But suddenly there came up from the east, from the rising of the sun, whose course Cæsar had followed, such a tremendous roar that she involuntarily clutched her companion's hand.

Every instant the storm of noise increased, rolling on with irresistible vehemence, gathering force as it came on, receiving, as it were, fresh tributaries on its way, and rapidly swelling from the distance to the immediate vicinity, compelling every one, as with a magic power, to yield to the superior will of numbers and join in the cry. Even Melissa cheered. She, too, was as a drop in the tide, a leaf on the rippling face of the rushing torrent; her heart beat as wildly and her voice rang as clear as that of the rest of the throng, intoxicated with they knew not what, which crowded the colonnades by the roadway, and every window and roof-top, waving handkerchiefs, strewing flowers on the ground, and wiping the tears which this unwonted excitement had brought to their eyes.

And now the shout is so tremendous that it could not possibly be louder. It seems as though it were the union of voices innumerable rather than the sea-breeze, which flutters the pennons and flags which

wave from every house and arch, and sways the garlands hung across the street. Melissa can see none but flushed faces, eyes swimming in tears, parted lips, wildly waving arms and hands. Then suddenly a mysterious power hushes the loud tones close round her; she hears only here and there the cry of "Cæsar!" "He is coming!" "Here he is!"—and the swift tramp of hoofs and the clatter of wheels sounding like the rattle of an iron building after a peal of thunder, above the shouts of ten thousand human beings. Closer it comes and closer, without a pause, and followed by fresh shouting, as a flock of daws follow an owl flying across the twilight, swelling again to irrepressible triumph as the expected potentate rushes past Melissa and her neighbors. They only see Cæsar as a form scarcely discerned by the eye during the space of a lightning-flash in a dark night.

Four tawny bay horses of medium size, dappled with black, harnessed abreast and wide apart, fly along the cleared road like hunted foxes, the light Gallic chariot at their heels. The wheels seem scarcely to touch the smooth flags of the Alexandrian pavement. The charioteer wears the red-bordered toga of the highest Roman officials. He is well known by repute, and the subject of many a sharp jest; for this is Pandion, formerly a stable-boy, and now one of "Cæsar's friends," a prætor, and one of the great men of the empire. But he knows his business; and what does Caracalla care for tradition or descent, for the murmurs and discontent of high or low?

Pandion holds the reins with elegant composure, and urges the horses to a frantic pace by a mere whistle, without ever using the whip. But why is it that he whirls the mighty monarch of half a world,

before whose bloodthirsty power every one quakes, so swiftly past these eager spectators ? Sunk in the cushions on one side, Bassianus Antoninus is reclining rather than sitting in the four-wheeled open chariot of Gallic make which sweeps past. He does not vouchsafe a glance at the jubilant crowd, but gazes down at the road, his well-shaped brow so deeply furrowed with gloom that he might be meditating some evil deed.

It is easy to discern that he is of middle height ; that his upper lip and cheeks are unshaven, and his chin smooth ; that his hair is already thin, though he lacks two years of thirty ; and that his complexion is pale and sallow ; indeed, his aspect is familiar from statues and coins, many of which are of base metal.

Most of those who thus beheld the man who held in his hand the fate of each individual he passed, as of the empire at large, involuntarily asked themselves afterward what impression he had made on them ; and Caracalla himself would have rejoiced in the answer, for he aimed not at being attractive or admired, but only at being feared. But, indeed, they had long since learned that there was nothing too horrible to be expected of him ; and, now that they had seen him, they were of opinion that his appearance answered to his deeds. It would be hard to picture a more sinister and menacing looking man than this emperor, with his averted looks and his haughty contempt for the world and mankind ; and yet there was something about him which made it difficult to take him seriously, especially to an Alexandrian. There was a touch of the grotesque in the Gallic robe with a red hood in which this ominous-looking contemner of humanity was wrapped. It was called a *Caracalla*, and it was

from this garment that Bassianus Antoninus had gained his nickname.

The tyrant who wore this gaudy cloak was, no doubt, devoid alike of truth and conscience; but, as to his being a philosopher, who knew the worthlessness of earthly things and turned his back upon the world, those who could might believe it! He was no more than an actor, who played the part of Timon not amiss, and who made use of his public to work upon their fears and enjoy the sight of their anguish. There was something lacking in him to make one of those thorough-going haters of their kind at whose mere aspect every knee must bend. The appearance, in short, of this false philosopher was not calculated to subdue the rash tongues of the Alexandrians.

To this many of them agreed; still, there was no time for such reflections till the dust had shrouded the chariot, which vanished as quickly as it had come, till the shouting was stilled, and the crowd had spread over the roadway again. Then they began to ask themselves why they had joined in the acclamations, and had been so wildly excited; how it was that they had so promptly surrendered their self-possession and dignity for the sake of this wicked little man. Perhaps it was his unlimited control over the weal and woe of the world, over the life and death of millions, which raised a mortal, not otherwise formed for greatness, so far above common humanity to a semblance of divinity. Perhaps it was the instinctive craving to take part in the grand impulsive expression of thousands of others that had carried away each individual. It was beyond a doubt a mysterious force which had compelled every one to do as his neighbors did as soon as Cæsar had appeared.

Melissa had succumbed with the rest ; she had shouted and waved her kerchief, and had not heeded Andreas when he held her hand and asked her to consider what a criminal this man was whom she so eagerly hailed. It was not till all was still again that she recollected herself, and her determination to get the famous physician to visit her lover revived in renewed strength.

Fully resolved to dare all, she looked about with calm scrutiny, considering the ways and means of achieving her purpose without any aid from Andreas. She was in a fever of impatience, and longed to force her way at once into the Serapeum. But that was out of the question, for no one moved from his place. There was, however, plenty to be seen. A complete revulsion of feeling had come over the crowd. In the place of Expectancy, its graceless step-child, Disappointment, held sway. There were no more shouts of joy ; men's lungs were no longer strained to the utmost, but their tongues were all the busier. Cæsar was for the most part spoken of with contempt as Tarautas, and with the bitterness—the grandchild of Expectancy—which comes of disappointment. Tarautas had originally been the name of a stunted but particularly bloodthirsty gladiator, in whom ill-will had traced some resemblance to Cæsar.

The more remarkable figures in the imperial train were curiously gazed at and discussed. A worker in mosaic, who stood near Melissa, had been employed in the decoration of the baths of Caracalla at Rome, and had much information to impart ; he even knew the names of several of the senators and courtiers attached to Cæsar. And, with all this, time was found to give vent to discontent.



The town had done its utmost to make itself fine enough to receive the emperor. Statues had been erected of himself, of his father, his mother, and even of his favorite heroes, above all of Alexander the Great; triumphal arches without number had been constructed. The vast halls of the Serapeum, through which he was to pass, had been magnificently decorated; and in front of the new temple, outside the Kanopic Gate, dedicated to his father, who now ranked among the gods, the elders of the town had been received by Cæsar, to do him homage and offer him the gifts of the city. All this had cost many talents, a whole heap of gold; but Alexandria was wealthy, and ready to make even greater sacrifices if only they had been accepted with thanks and condescension. But a young actor, who had been a spectator of the scene at the Kanopic Gate, and had then hurried hither, declared, with dramatic indignation, that Cæsar had only replied in a few surly words to the address of the senate, and even while he accepted the gift had looked as if he were being ill-used. The delegates had retired as though they had been condemned to death. To none but Timotheus, the high-priest of Serapis, had he spoken graciously.

Others confirmed this report; and dissatisfaction found expression in muttered abuse or satirical remarks and bitter witticisms.

"Why did he drive past so quickly?" asked a tailor's wife; and some one replied:

"Because the Eumenides, who haunt him for murdering his brother, lash him on with their whips of snakes!"

A spice-merchant, who was not less indignant but more cautious, hearing a neighbor inquire why

Tarautas drove panther-spotted horses, replied that such beasts of prey had spotted skins, and that like to like was a common rule. A cynical philosopher, who proclaimed his sect by his ragged garment, unkempt hair, and rough mode of speech, declared that Cæsar had a senator to guide his chariot because he had long since succeeded in turning the senate-house into a stable.

To all this, however, Melissa turned a deaf ear, for the thought of the great Roman leech possessed her mind entirely. She listened earnestly to the mosaic-worker, who had come close up to her, and officiously mentioned the names of the most important personages as they went past. Cæsar's train seemed endless. It included not merely horse and foot soldiers, but numberless baggage-wagons, cars, elephants—which Caracalla especially affected, because Alexander the Great had been fond of these huge beasts—horses, mules, and asses, loaded with bales, cases, tents, and camp and kitchen furniture. Mingling with these came sutlers, attendants, pages, heralds, musicians, and slaves of the imperial household, in knots and parties, looking boldly about them at the bystanders. When they caught sight of a young and pretty woman on the edge of the path, they would wave a greeting; and many expressed their admiration of Melissa in a very insolent manner. Woolly-headed negroes and swarthy natives of north Africa mixed with the fairer dwellers on the Mediterranean and the yellow or red haired sons of northern Europe. Roman lictors, and Scythian, Thracian, or Keltic men-at-arms kept every one out of the way who did not belong to the imperial train, with relentless determination. Only the Magians, wonder-workers, and street wenches were suffered to push their way in

among the horses, asses, elephants, dogs, vehicles, and mounted troops.

Each time that one of the unwieldy traveling-carriages, drawn by several horses, came in sight, in which the wealthy Roman was wont to take his ease on a long journey, or whenever a particularly splendid litter was borne past, Melissa asked the mosaic-worker for information. In some few instances Andreas could satisfy her curiosity, for he had spent some months at Antioch on a matter of business, and had there come to know by sight some of Cæsar's most illustrious companions.

So far the great Galenus was not of the number; for Caracalla, who was ailing, had but lately commanded his presence. The famous physician had sailed for Pelusium, in spite of his advanced age, and had only just joined the sovereign's suite. The old man's chariot had been pointed out to the mosaic-worker at the Kanopic Gate, and he was certain that he could not mistake it for any other; it was one of the largest and handsomest; the side doors of it were decorated with the Æsculapius staff and the cup of Hygeia in silver, and on the top were statuettes in wood of Minerva and of Æsculapius. On hearing all this, Melissa's face beamed with happy and hopeful anticipation. With one hand pressed to her throbbing bosom, she watched each vehicle as it drove past with such intense expectancy that she paid no heed to Andreas's hint that they might now be able to make their way through the crowd.

Now—and the freedman had called her once more—here was another monstrous conveyance, belonging to Julius Paulinus, the former consul, whose keen face, with its bright, merry eyes, looked out between the silken curtains by the side of the

grave, unsympathetic countenance of Dion Cassius, the senator and historian.

The consul, her informant told her—and Andreas confirmed the statement—had displeased Severus, Caracalla's father, by some biting jest, but, on being threatened with death, disarmed his wrath by saying, "You can indeed have my head cut off, but neither you nor I can keep it steady."

Those of the populace who stood near enough to the speaker to hear this anecdote broke out in loud cheers, in which they were joined by others who had no idea of what had given rise to them.

The consul's chariot was followed by a crowd of clients, domestic officials, and slaves, in litters, on horses or mules, or on foot; and behind these again came another vehicle, for some time concealed from sight by dust. But when at last the ten fine horses which drew it had gone past Melissa, and the top of the vehicle became visible, the color mounted to her cheeks, for on the corners of the front she recognized the figures of *Æsculapius* and *Minerva*, which, if the mosaic-worker were right, distinguished the chariot of *Galenus*. She listened breathlessly to the roll of the wheels of this coach, and she soon perceived the silver *Æsculapius* staff and bowl on the wide door of this house on wheels, which was painted blue. At an open window by the door a kindly old face was visible, framed in long, gray hair.

Melissa started at hearing the order to halt shouted from the *Serapeum*, far down the road, and again, close at hand, "Halt!" The procession came to a standstill, the riders drew rein, the blue wheels ceased to turn, the coach was immovable but a few steps in front of her, and her eyes met those of the old man. The thought flashed through

her brain that Fate itself had brought about this pause just at this spot; and when she heard the mosaic-worker exclaim, "The great Roman physician!" horses, coach, and everything swam before her eyes; she snatched her hand away from that of Andreas, and stepped out on the roadway. In an instant she was standing face to face with the venerable leech.

She heard the warning voice of her companion, she saw the crowd staring at her, she had, no doubt, a brief struggle with her maidenly shyness, but she carried out her purpose. The thought that the gods themselves were helping her to appeal to the only man who could save her lover, encouraged her to defy every obstacle.

She was standing by the vehicle; and scarcely had she raised her sweet, innocent, blushing face with pathetic and touching entreaty to the white-haired Roman, her large, tear-filled eyes meeting his, when he beckoned her to him, and in pleasant, sympathetic tones desired to know what she wanted. Then she made bold to ask whether he were the great Roman physician, and he replied with a flattered and kindly smile that he was sometimes so called. Her thankful glance to heaven revealed what a comfort his words were, and now her rosy lips moved freely, and she hurriedly, but with growing courage, gave him to understand that her betrothed, the son of a respected Roman citizen of Alexandria, was lying badly wounded in the head by a stone, and that the leech who was treating him had said that none but he, the great Galenus, could save the young man's life. She also explained that Ptolemæus, though he had said that Diodoros needed quiet above all things, had proposed to carry him to the Serapeum, and to com-

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mend him there to the care of his greater colleague, but that she feared the worst results from the move.

She glanced pleadingly into the Roman's eyes, and added that he looked so kind that she hoped that he would go instead to see the sufferer, who had, quite by chance, been taken into a Christian house not very far from the Serapeum, where he was being taken good care of, and—as a matter of course—cure her lover.

The old man had only interrupted her tale with a few sly questions as to her love-affair and her religion; for when she had told him that Diodoros was under the care of Christians, it had occurred to him that this simply but not poorly dressed girl, with her modest ways and sweet, calm face, might herself be a Christian. He was almost surprised when she denied it, and yet he seemed pleased, and promised to grant her request. It was not fitting that a girl so young should enter any house where Cæsar and his train took up their abode; he would wait for her, "there"—and he pointed to a small, round temple to Aphrodite, on the left-hand side of the street of Hermes, where the road was rather wider—for the coach had meanwhile slowly moved on.

Next day, at three hours after the rising of the fierce African sun—for he could not bear its meridian heat—he would go thither in his litter. "And be sure you are there in good time!" he added, shaking his finger at her.

"If you come an hour too soon, you will find me waiting!" she cried.

He laughed, and said, "What pretty maid, indeed, would dare to be late for an appointment under the very eyes of the goddess of Love!" He bade her a friendly farewell, and lay back in the chariot.

Melissa, radiant with happiness, looked about her for the place where she had left her companion. However, in spite of the lictors, Andreas had followed her; he drew her hand under his arm, and led her through the now-thinning crowd into a side-lane which led to the lake, opening out of the colonnaded street opposite the little temple.

Melissa's steps were winged. Her joy at having gained her end so quickly and so easily was uppermost in her mind, and as they threaded their way among the people she tried to tell Andreas what the great physician had promised. But the noise drowned her speech, for at this moment Cæsar's tame lion, named the "Sword of Persia" was being led through the street by some Numidian slaves.

Every one was looking at the splendid beast; and, as she too turned to gaze, her eye met the ardent glance of a tall, bearded man standing at the window of a house just behind the round temple to Aphrodite. She at once recognized Serapion, the Magian, and whispered his name to Andreas; he, however, without looking round, only drew her along more quickly, and did not breathe easily till they found themselves in the narrow, deserted alley.

The Magian had observed her while she stood by the Roman's chariot, and his conversation with a Syrian of middle age in his company had been of her. His companion's appearance was as insignificant as his own was stately and commanding. Nothing distinguished the Syrian from a thousand of his fellows but the cunning stamped on his sharply-cut features; still, the great Magian seemed to hold him in some esteem, for he readily replied to the little man's questions and remarks.

At this moment the Syrian waved his hand in the

air with a gesture common to men of his race when displaying their own superior knowledge, as he said:

"What did I spend ten years in Rome for, if I do not know Serenus Samonicus? He is the greatest book-collector in the empire. And he regards himself as a second Æsculapius, and has written a book on medicine in verse, which Geta, Cæsar's murdered brother, always had about him, for he regarded the physicians here as mere bunglers. He is as rich as the Alabarch, and riding in his coach is Galenus, for whom Cæsar sent. What can that girl want of him?"

"H'm!" muttered the other, stroking his beard with thoughtful dignity. "She is a modest maiden; it can only be something urgent and important which has prompted her to address the Roman."

"Your Castor will be able to find out," replied the Syrian Annianus. "That omniscient rascal can get through a key-hole, and by to-morrow will be the best friend of the Roman's people, if you care to know."

"We will see," said Serapion. "Her brother, perhaps, to-morrow evening, will tell me what is going on."

"The philosopher?" said the other, with a contemptuous flourish. "You are a great sage, Serapion, as the people hold; but you often sew with needles too fine for me. Why, just now, when Cæsar is here, and gain and honor lie in the streets for such a one as you only to stoop for—why, I say, you should waste precious time on that poring fellow from the Museum, I can not understand."

A superior smile parted the Magian's lips; he stepped back into the room, followed by Annianus, and replied:

"You know how many who call themselves



Magians will crowd round Cæsar, and the fame of Sosibius, Hananja, and Kaimis, is not much behind mine. Each plies his art by his own formulas, though he may call himself a Pythagorean or what not. None dare claim to belong to any recognized school, since the philosophers of the guild pride themselves on condemning the miracle-mongers. Now, in his youth, Caracalla went through his courses of philosophy. He detests Aristotle, and has always attached himself to Plato and the Pythagoreans. You yourself told me that by his desire Philostratus is writing a life of Apollonius of Tyana; and, though he may turn up his nose at the hair-splitting and frittering of the sages of the Museum, it is in his blood to look for marvels from those privileged philosophers. His mother has made courtiers of them again; and he, who looks for everything from the magic arts, has never yet met a Magian who could have been one of them."

At this the Syrian clapped his hands, exclaiming:

"And you propose to use Philip as your sign-bearer to talk to the emperor of a thaumaturgist who is hand in hand with all the learning of the Museum? A cursed good idea! But the gem-cutter's son does not look like a simpleton; and he is a skeptic into the bargain, and believes in nothing. If you catch him, I shall really and truly believe in your miraculous powers."

"There are harder things than catching him," said the Magian.

"You mean to break his will," said the Syrian, looking down at the ground, "by your eye and the laying on of hands, as you did mine and Triphis's two years ago?"

"That, no doubt, formed the first bond between us," said Serapion. "I now need only your ven-

triloquism. Philip himself will come half-way to meet me on the main point."

"And what is that?"

"You called him a skeptic, and he does, in fact, pride himself on going further than the old masters of the school. Diligent study has brought him to the point of regarding nothing as certain, but, on the other hand, everything as possible. The last result he can arrive at is the probability—since certainty there is none—that it is impossible ever to know anything, be it what it may. He is always ready to listen with sympathetic attention to the arguments for the reappearance of the souls of the dead in the earthly form they have quitted, to visit and converse with the living. He considers it a fallacy to say that anything is impossible; and my arguments are substantial. Korinna will appear to him. Castor has discovered a girl who is her very image. Your arts will convince him that it is she who speaks to him, for he never heard her voice in life, and all this must rouse his desire to see her again and again. And thus the skeptic will be convinced, in spite of his own doctrine. In this, as in every other case, it is the passionate wish that gives rise to the belief."

"And when you have succeeded in getting him to this point?" asked the Syrian, anxiously.

"Then," replied the Magian, "he will help me, with his triumphant dialectics, to win Cæsar over to the same conviction; and then we shall be able to satisfy the emperor's desire to hold intercourse with the dead; and for that I count on your power of making voices proceed from any person present."

He said no more. The little man looked up at him approvingly, and said, modestly: "You are indeed wise, Serapion, and I will do my best to help

you. The next thing to be done is to seek representatives of the great Alexander, of Apollonius of Tyana, and of Cæsar's brother, father-in-law, and wife."

"Not forgetting Papinian, the noblest of his victims," added the Magian.—"Back again already, Castor?"

These words were addressed to a tall and apparently elderly man in a long white robe, who had slipped in without a sound. His demeanor was so grave and dignified that he looked precisely like a Christian priest impressed with the sanctity of his office; but hardly had he got into the room, and greeted the Magian with much unction, than he pulled the white garment off over his head, rubbed from his cheeks the lines which gave him twenty added years, stretched his lithe limbs, and exclaimed with delight:

"I have got her! Old Dorothea will bring her to your theatre!"—and the young fellow's mobile face beamed with the happy radiance of success. It almost seemed as though fermenting wine flowed in the man's veins instead of blood; for, when he had made his report to the Magian, and had been rewarded with a handful of gold-pieces, he tossed the coins in the air, caught them like flies in the hollow of his hand, and then pitched wheel fashion over head and heels from one end of the room to the other. Then, when he stood on his feet once more, he went on, without a sign of breathlessness:

"Forgive me, my lord! Nature asserts her rights. To play the pious for three whole hours! Eternal gods, that is a hard task, and a man must—"

"I know all about it," Serapion broke in with a smile and a threatening finger. "Now go and

stretch your limbs, and then share your lightly earned gains with some pretty flute-player. But I want you again this evening; so, if you feel weak, I shall lock you up."

"Do," said Castor, as earnestly as if he had been promised some pleasure. "What a merry, good-for-nothing set they are!—Dorothea will bring the girl at the appointed hour. Everything is arranged."

Whereupon he danced out of the room, singing a tune.

"An invaluable creature!" said the Syrian, with an admiring glance.

"A better one spoiled," said Serapion. "He has the very highest gifts, but is utterly devoid of conscience to set a limit to his excesses. How should he have one? His father was one of a troupe of Ephesian pantomimists, and his mother a golden-haired Cyprian dancer. But he knows every corner of Alexandria—and then, what a memory! What an actor he would have made! Without even a change of dress, merely by a grimace, he at once becomes an old man, an idiot, or a philosopher."

"And what a genius for intrigue!" Annianus went on enthusiastically. "As soon as he saw the portrait of Korinna he knew that he had seen her double among the Christians on the other side of the lake. This morning he tracked her out, and now she is caught in the snare. And how sharp of him to make Dorothea bring her here!"

"I told him to do that, and use the name of Bishop Demetrius," observed the Magian. "She would not have come with a stranger, and Dorothea must be known to her in the meetings of their congregation."

## CHAPTER IX.

WHILE this conversation was taking place, Melissa and her companion had reached the shore of the lake, the large inland sea which washed the southern side of the city and afforded anchorage for the Nile-boats. The ferry-boat which would convey them to the gardens of Polybius started from the Agathodæmon Canal, an enlarged branch of the Nile, which connected the lake with the royal harbor and the Mediterranean; they had, therefore, to walk some distance along the shore.

The setting sun shot slanting rays on the glittering surface of the glassy waters in which the numberless masts of the Nile-boats were mirrored. Vessels large and small, with white or gayly-painted lateen sails gleaming in the evening glow, large galleys, light skiffs, and restless, skimming pleasure-boats, were flitting to and fro; and among them, like loaded wagons among chariots and horsemen, the low corn-barges scarcely seemed to move, piled as they were with pyramids of straw and grain as high as a house.

The bustle on the quay was less conspicuous than usual, for all who were free to follow their curiosity had gone into the city. There were, however, many slaves, and Cæsar's visit no more affected their day's toil than it did the course of the sun. To-day, as every other day, they had to pack

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and unload; and though few ships were sailing, numbers were arriving from the south, and throwing out the landing-bridges which connected them with the shore.

The number of pleasure-boats, on the other hand, was greater than usual; for business was suspended, and many who hated the crowd found pleasure in rowing in their own boats. Others had come to see the imperial barge, which had been newly furnished up, and which was splendid enough to attract even the luxurious Alexandrians. Gold and ivory, purple sails, bronze and marble statues at the prow and stern, and in the little shrines on the after-deck, combined in a gorgeous display, made all the more brilliant by the low sun, which added vividness to every hue.

It was pleasant to linger on the strand at this hour. Spreading sycamores and plumed palms cast a pleasant shade; the heat of the day had abated, and a light air, which always blew in from the lake, fanned Melissa's brow. There was no crushing mob, and no dust came up from the well-watered roadway, and yet the girl had lost her cheerful looks, in spite of the success of her bold venture; and Andreas walked by her side, silent and ill-pleased.

She could not understand him; for, as long as she could remember, his grave looks had always brightened at anything that had brought gladness to her or to her mother. Besides, her success with the Roman would be to the advantage of Diodoros, and the freedman was devoted to him. Every now and then she perceived that his eye rested on her with a compassionate expression, and when she inquired whether he were anxious about the sufferer, he gave her some evasive answer, quite unlike his

usual decisive speech. This added to her alarm. At last his dissatisfied and unsatisfactory replies vexed the usually patient girl, and she told him so; for she could not suspect how painfully her triumph in her hasty deed jarred on her truth-loving friend. He knew that it was not to the great Galenus, but to the wealthy Serenus Samonicus, that she had spoken; for the physician's noble and thoughtful features were familiar to him from medals, statues, and busts. He had seen Samonicus, too, at Antioch, and held his medical lore, as expressed in verse, very cheap. How worthless would this man's help be! In spite of his promise, Diodoros would after all have to be conveyed to the Serapeum; and yet Andreas could not bear to crush his darling's hopes.

He had hitherto known her as a patient, dutiful child; to-day he had seen with what unhesitating determination she could carry out a purpose; and he feared that, if he told her the truth, she would at once make her way into Cæsar's quarters, in defiance of every obstacle, to crave the assistance of the true Galen. He must leave her in error, and yet he could not bear to do so; for there was no art in which he was so inexpert as that of deceit. How hard it was to find the right answer, when she asked him whether he did not hope everything from the great physician's intervention, or when she inquired what were the works to which Galen owed his chief fame!

As they came near to the landing-stage whence the ferry started, she wanted to know how old he should suppose the Roman leech to be; and again he avoided answering, for Galen was above eighty, and Serenus scarcely seventy.

She looked up at him with large, mournful eyes,

saying, "Have I offended you, or is there something you are concealing from me?"

"What could you do to offend me?" he replied; "life is full of sorrows, my child. You must learn to have patience."

"Patience!" echoed Melissa, sadly. "That is the only knowledge I have ever mastered. When my father is more sullen than you are, for a week at a time, I scarcely heed it. But when you look like that, Andreas, it is not without cause, and that is why I am anxious."

"One we love is very sick, child," he said, soothingly; but she was not to be put off so, and exclaimed with conviction:

"No, no, it is not that. We have learned nothing fresh about Diodoros, and you were ready enough to answer me when we came away from the Christian's house. Nothing but good has happened to us since, and yet you look as if the locusts had come down on your garden."

They had reached a spot on the shore where a ship was being unloaded of its cargo of granite blocks from Syene. Black and brown slaves were dragging them to land. An old blind man was piping a dismal tune on a small reed flute to encourage them in their work, while two men of fairer hue, whose burden had been too heavy for them, had let the end of the column they were carrying sink on the ground, and were being mercilessly flogged by the overseer to make them once more attempt the impossible.

Andreas had watched the scene; a surge of fury had brought the blood to his face, and, stirred by great and genuine emotion, he broke out:

"There—there you see the locusts which destroy my garden, the hail which ruins my crops! It falls



on all that bears the name of humanity—on me and you. Happy, girl? None of us can ever be happy till the Kingdom shall arise for which the fullness of the time is come."

"But they dropped the column; I saw them myself," urged Melissa.

"Did you, indeed?" said Andreas. "Well, well, the whip, no doubt, can revive exhausted powers. And that is how you look upon such deeds!—you, who would not crush a worm in the garden, think this is right and just!"

It suddenly struck Melissa that Andreas, too, had once been a slave, and the feeling that she had hurt him grieved her to the heart. She had often heard him speak sternly and gravely, but never in scorn as he did now, and that, too, distressed her; and as she could not think of the right thing to say in atonement for the wrong she had done, she could only look up with tearful entreaty and murmur, "Forgive me!"

"I have nothing to forgive," he replied in an altered tone. "You have grown up among the unjust who are now in power. How should you see more clearly than they, who all walk in darkness? But if the light should be shown to you by one to whom it hath been revealed, it would not be extinguished again.—Does it not seem a beautiful thing to you to live among none but brethren and sisters, instead of among oppressors and their scourged victims; or is there no place in a woman's soul for the holy wrath that came upon Moses the Hebrew?—But who would ever have spoken his great name to you?"

Melissa was about to interrupt his vehement speech, for, in a town where there were so many Jews, alike among the citizens and the slaves, even

she had heard that Moses had been their lawgiver; but he prevented her, by adding hastily: "This only, child, I would have you remember—for here is the ferry—the worst ills that man ever inflicts on his fellow-man are the outcome of self-interest; and, of all the good he may do, the best is the result of his achieving self-forgetfulness to secure the happiness and welfare of others."

He said no more, for the ferry-boat was about to put off, and they had to take their places as quickly as possible.

The large flat barge was almost unoccupied; for the multitude still lingered in the town, and more than one seat was empty for the weary girl to rest on. Andreas paced to and fro, for he was restless; but when Melissa beckoned to him he came close to her, and, while he leaned against the little cabin, received her assurance that she now quite understood his desire to see all slaves made free. He, if any one, must know what the feelings of those unhappy creatures were.

"Do I not know!" he exclaimed, with a shake of the head. Then, glancing round at the few persons who were sitting at the other end of the boat, he went on sadly: "To know that, a man must himself have been branded with the marks of his humiliation." He showed her his arm, which was usually hidden by the long sleeve of his tunic, and Melissa exclaimed in sorrowful surprise: "But you were free-born! and none of our slaves bear such a brand. You must have fallen into the hands of Syrian pirates."

He nodded, and added, "I and my father."

"But he," the girl eagerly put in, "was a great man."

"Till Fate overtook him," Andreas said.

Melissa's tearful eyes showed the warm sympathy she felt, as she asked :

“ But how could it have happened that you were not ransomed by your relations ? Your father was, no doubt, a Roman citizen ; and the law—”

“ The law forbids that such a one should be sold into slavery,” Andreas broke in, “ and yet the authorities of Rome left him in misery—left—”

At this, her large, gentle eyes flashed with indignation, and, stirred to the depths of her nature, she exclaimed :

“ How was such horrible injustice possible ? Oh, let me hear. You know how truly I love you, and no one can hear you.”

The wind had risen, the waves splashed noisily against the broad boat, and the song of the slaves, as they plied their oars, would have drowned a stronger voice than the freedman's ; so he sat down by her side to do her bidding.

And the tale he had to tell was sad indeed.

His father had been of knightly rank, and in the reign of Marcus Aurelius he had been in the service of Avidius Cassius, his fellow-countryman, the illustrious governor of Asia as *procurator ab epistolis*. As holding this high post, he found himself involved in the conspiracy of Avidius against the emperor. After the assassination of his patron, who had already been proclaimed emperor by the troops, Andreas's father had been deprived of his offices, his citizenship, and his honors ; his possessions were confiscated, and he was exiled to the island of Anaphe. It was to Cæsar's clemency that he owed his life.

On their voyage into exile the father and son fell into the hands of Syrian pirates, and were sold in the slave-market of Alexandria to two separate masters. Andreas was bought by a tavern-keeper ;

the procurator, whose name as a slave was Smaragdus, by the father of Polybius; and this worthy man soon learned to value his servant so highly, that he purchased the son also, and restored him to his father. Thus they were once more united.

Every attempt of the man who had once held so proud a position to get his release, by an act of the senate, proved vain. It was with a broken heart and enfeebled health that he did his duty to his master and to his only child. He pined in torments of melancholy, till Christianity opened new happiness to him, and revived hope brought him back from the very brink of despair; and, even as a slave, he found the highest of all dignities—that, namely, which a Christian derives from his faith.

At this point Melissa interrupted her friend's narrative, exclaiming, as she pointed across the waters:

"There! there! look! In that boat— I am sure that is Alexander! And he is making for the town."

Andreas started up, and after convincing himself that she was indeed right, for the youth himself had recognized his sister, who waved her hand to him, he wrathfully exclaimed:

"Madman!" and by intelligible and commanding signs he ordered the reckless young artist to turn his little skiff, and follow in the wake of the ferry-boat, which was by this time nearing land.

But Alexander signaled a negative, and, after gayly blowing a kiss to Melissa, plied his oars again with as much speed and energy as though he were rowing for a wager. How swiftly and steadily the keel of his little boat cut through the crisply foaming waves on which it rose and fell! The daring youth did not lack strength, that was certain, and the

couple who watched him with so much uneasiness soon understood that he was striving to overtake another and larger bark which was at some distance in front of him. It was being pulled by slaves, whose stalwart arms made the pace a good one, and under the linen awning which shaded the middle part of it two women were seated.

The rays of the sun, whose fiery globe was now sinking behind the palm-groves on the western shore, flooded the sky with ruby light, and tinged the white robes of these women, the light canopy over their heads, and the whole face of the lake, with a rosy hue; but neither Andreas nor his companion heeded the glorious farewell of departing day.

Melissa pointed out to her friend the strangeness of her brother's attire, and the hood which, in the evening light, seemed to be bordered with gold. He had on, in fact, a Gallic mantle, such as that which had gained Cæsar the nickname of Caracalla, and there was in this disguise something to reassure them; for, if Alexander pulled the hood low enough, it would hide the greater part of his face, and make it difficult to recognize him. Whence he had procured this garment was not hard to divine, for imperial servants had distributed them in numbers among the crowd. Cæsar was anxious to bring them into fashion, and it might safely be expected that those Alexandrians who had held out their hands to accept them would appear in them on the morrow, as no order required that they should be worn. Alexander could not do better than wear one, if only by such means he could escape Zminis and his men.

But who were the women he was pursuing?

Before Melissa could ask the question, Andreas pointed to the foremost boat, and said:

"Those are Christian women, and the bark they are in belongs to Zeno, the brother of Seleukus and of the high-priest of Serapis. That is his landing-creek. He lives with his family, and those of the faith to whom he affords refuge, in the long, white house you can just see there among the palm-trees. Those vineyards, too, are his. If I am not mistaken, one of the ladies in that boat is his daughter, Agatha."

"But what can Alexander want of two Christian women?" asked Melissa.

Andreas fired up, and a vein started on his high forehead as he retorted angrily :

"What should he not want! He and those who are like him—the blind—think nothing so precious as what satisfies the eye.—There! the brightness has vanished which turned the lake and the shore to gold. Such is beauty!—a vain show, which only glitters to disappear, and is to fools, nevertheless, the supreme object of adoration!"

"Then, is Zeno's daughter fair?" asked the girl.

"She is said to be," replied the other; and after a moment's pause he added: "Yes, Agatha is a rarely accomplished woman; but I know better things of her than that. It stirs my gall to think that her sacred purity can arouse unholy thoughts. I love your brother dearly; for your mother's sake I can forgive him much; but if he tries to ensnare Agatha—"

"Have no fear," said Melissa, interrupting his wrathful speech. "Alexander is indeed a butterfly, fluttering from flower to flower, and apt to be frivolous over serious matters, but at this moment he is enslaved by a vision—that of a dead girl; and only last night, I believe, he pledged himself to Ino, the

pretty daughter of our neighbor Skopas. Beauty is to him the highest thing in life; and how should it be otherwise, for he is an artist! For the sake of beauty he defies every danger. If you saw rightly, he is no doubt in pursuit of Zeno's daughter, but most likely not to pay court to her, but for some other reason."

"No praiseworthy reason, you may be sure," said Andreas. "Here we are. Now take your kerchief out of the basket. It is damp and cool after sundown, especially over there where I am draining the bog. The land we are reclaiming by this means will bring your future husband a fine income some day."

They disembarked, and ere long reached the little haven belonging to Polybius's estate. There were boats moored there, large and small, and Andreas hailed the man who kept them, and who sat eating his supper, to ask him whether he had unmoored the green skiff for Alexander.

At this the old fellow laughed, and said: "The jolly painter and his friend, the sculptor, met Zeno's daughter just as she was getting into her boat with Mariamne. Down they came, running as if they had gone mad. The girl must have turned their heads. My lord Alexander would have it that he had seen the spirit of one who was dead, and he would gladly give his life to see her once again."

It was now dark, or it would have alarmed Melissa to see the ominous gravity with which Andreas listened to this tale; but she herself was sufficiently startled, for she knew her brother well, and that no risk, however great, would stop him if his artistic fancy were fired. He, whom she had believed to be in safety, had gone straight into the hands of the pursuers; and with him caution and

reflection were flown to the winds when passion held sway. She had hoped that her friend Ino had at last captured the flutterer, and that he would begin to live a settled life with her, as master of a house of his own; and now, for a pretty face, he had thrown everything to the winds, even the duty of self-preservation. Andreas had good reason to be angry, and he spoke no more till they reached their destination, a country house of handsome and important aspect.

No father could have received his future daughter more heartily than did old Polybius. The fiend gout racked his big toes, stabbing, burning, and nipping them. The slightest movement was torture, and yet he held out his arms to her for a loving embrace, and, though it made him shut his eyes and groan, he drew her pretty head down, and kissed her cheeks and hair. He was now a heavy man, of almost shapeless stoutness, but in his youth he must have resembled his handsome son. Silvery locks flowed round his well-formed head, but a habit of drinking wine, which, in spite of the gout, he could not bring himself to give up, had flushed his naturally good features, and tinged them of a coppery red, which contrasted strangely with his snowy hair and beard. But a kind heart, benevolence, and a love of good living, beamed in every look.

His heavy limbs moved but slowly, and if ever full lips deserved to be called sensual, they were those of this man, who was a priest of two divinities.

How well his household understood the art of catering for his love of high living, was evident in the meal which was served soon after Melissa's arrival, and to eat which the old man made her recline on the couch by his side.



Andreas also shared the supper; and not the attendant slaves only, but Dame Praxilla, the sister of their host, whose house she managed, paid him particular honor. She was a widow and childless, and, even during the lifetime of Diodoros's mother, she had given her heart, no longer young, to the freedman, without finding her love returned or even observed. For his sake she would have become a Christian, though she regarded herself as so indispensable to her brother that she had rarely left him to hold intercourse with other Christians. Nor did Andreas encourage her; he doubted her vocation. Whatever happened in the house, the excitable woman made it her own concern; and, although she had known Melissa from childhood, and was as fond of her as she could be of the child of "strangers," the news that Diodoros was to marry the gem-cutter's daughter was displeasing to her. A second woman in the house might interfere with her supremacy; and, as an excuse for her annoyance, she had represented to her brother that Diodoros might look higher for a wife. Agatha, the beautiful daughter of their rich Christian neighbor Zeno, was the right bride for the boy.

But Polybius had rated her sharply, declaring that he hoped for no sweeter daughter than Melissa, who was quite pretty enough, and in whose veins as pure Macedonian blood flowed as in his own. His son need look for no wealth, he added with a laugh, since he would some day inherit his aunt's.

In fact, Praxilla owned a fine fortune, increasing daily under the care of Andreas, and she replied:

"If the young couple behave so well that I do not rather choose to bestow my pittance on worthier heirs."

But the implied threat had not disturbed Po-

lybius, for he knew his sister's ways. The shriveled, irritable old lady often spoke words hard to be forgiven, but she had not a bad heart; and when she learned that Diodoros was in danger, she felt only how much she loved him, and her proposal to go to the town next morning to nurse him was sincerely meant.

But when her brother retorted: "Go, by all means; I do not prevent you!" she started up, exclaiming:

"And you, and your aches and pains! How you get on when once my back is turned, we know by experience. My presence alone is medicine to you."

"And a bitter dose it is very often," replied the old man, with a laugh; but Praxilla promptly retorted: "Like all effectual remedies. There is your ingratitude again!"

The last words were accompanied by a whimper, so Polybius, who could not bear to see any but cheerful faces, raised his cup and drank her health with kindly words. Then refilling the tankard, he poured a libation, and was about to empty it to Melissa's health, but Praxilla's lean frame was standing by his side as quickly as though a serpent had stung her. She was drawing a stick of asparagus between her teeth, but she hastily dropped it on her plate, and with both hands snatched the cup from her brother, exclaiming:

"It is the fourth; and if I allow you to empty it, you are a dead man!"

"Death is not so swift," replied Polybius, signing to a slave to bring him back the cup. But he drank only half of it, and, at his sister's pathetic entreaties, had more water mixed with the wine. And while Praxilla carefully prepared his crayfish—for gout had crippled even his fingers—he beckoned

to his white-haired body-slave, and with a cunning smile made him add more wine to the washy fluid. He fixed his twinkling glance on Melissa, to invite her sympathy in his successful trick, but her appearance startled him. How pale the child was—how dejected and weary her sweet face, with the usually bright, expressive eyes!

It needed not the intuition of his kind heart to tell him that she was completely exhausted, and he desired his sister to take her away to bed. But Melissa was already sound asleep, and Praxilla would not wake her. She gently placed a pillow under her head, laid her feet easily on the couch, and covered them with a wrap. Polybius feasted his eyes on the fair sleeper; and, indeed, nothing purer and more tender can be imagined than the girl's face as she lay in dreamless slumber.

The conversation was now carried on in subdued tones, so as not to disturb her, and Andreas completed the history of the day by informing them that Melissa had, by mistake, engaged the assistance not of the great Galen but of another Roman practiced in the healing art, but of less illustrious proficiency. He must, therefore, still have Dioscoros conveyed to the Serapeum, and this could be done very easily in the morning, before the populace should again besiege the temple. He must forthwith go back to make the necessary arrangements. Praxilla whispered tenderly:

"Devoted man that you are, you do not even get your night's rest." But Andreas turned away to discuss some further matters with Polybius; and, in spite of pain, the old man could express his views clearly and intelligently.

At last he took his leave; and now Praxilla had to direct the slaves who were to carry her brother

to bed. She carefully arranged the cushions on his couch, and gave him his medicine and night-draught. Then she returned to Melissa, and the sight of the sleeping girl touched her heart. She stood gazing at her for some time in silence, and then bent over her to wake her with a kiss. She had at last made up her mind to regard the gem-cutter's daughter as her niece, so, determined to treat her as a child of her own, she called Melissa by name.

This awoke the sleeper, and when she had realized that she was still in Polybius's eating-room, she asked for Andreas.

"He has gone back to the town, my child," replied Praxilla. "He was anxious about your betrothed."

"Is he worse, then?" asked Melissa, in alarm.

"No, no," said the widow, soothingly. "It is only—I assure you we have heard nothing new—"

"But what then?" Melissa inquired. "The great Galen is to see him early to-morrow."

Praxilla tried to divert her thoughts. But as the girl would take no answer to her declaration that Galen himself had promised to see Diodoros, Praxilla, who was little used to self-command, and who was offended by her persistency, betrayed the fact that Melissa had spoken to the wrong man, and that Andreas was gone to remove Diodoros to the Serapeum.

At this, Melissa suddenly understood why Andreas had not rejoiced with her, and at the same time she said to herself that her lover must on no account be exposed to so great a danger without her presence. She must lend her aid in transporting him to the Serapeum; and when she firmly expressed her views to the widow, Praxilla was shocked, and sincerely repented of having lost her

self-control. It was far too late, and when the housekeeper came into the room and gladly volunteered to accompany Melissa to the town, Praxilla threatened to rouse her brother, that he might insist on their remaining at home; but at last she relented, for the girl, she saw, would take her own way against any opposition.

The housekeeper had been nurse to Diodoros, and had been longing to help in tending him. When she left the house with Melissa, her eyes were moist with tears of joy and thankfulness.

## CHAPTER X.

THE Nubian boat-keeper and his boy had soon ferried them across the lake. Melissa and her companion then turned off from the shore into a street which must surely lead into that where the Christians dwelt. Still, even as she went on, she began to be doubtful whether she had taken the right one; and when she came out by a small temple, which she certainly had not seen before, she knew not which way to go, for the streets here crossed each other in a perfect labyrinth, and she was soon obliged to confess to her companion that she had lost her road. In the morning she had trusted herself to Andreas's knowledge of the town, and while talking eagerly to him had paid no heed to anything else.

What was to be done? She stood meditating; and then she remembered the spot where she had seen Cæsar drive past. This she thought she could certainly recognize, and from thence make her way to the street she sought.

It was quite easy to find the street of Hermes, for the noise of the revelers, who were to-night even more numerous than usual in this busy highway, could be heard at a considerable distance. They must follow its guidance till they should come to the little temple of Aphrodite; and that was a bold enterprise, for the crowd of men who haunted the spot at this hour might possibly hinder and an-

noy two unescorted women. However, the elder woman was sturdy and determined, and sixty years of age; while Melissa feared nothing, and thought herself sufficiently protected when she had arranged her kerchief so as to hide her face from curious eyes.

As she made her way to the wide street with a throbbing heart, but quite resolved to find the house she sought at any cost, she heard men's voices on a side street; however, she paid no heed to them, for how, indeed, could she guess that what they were saying could nearly concern her?

The conversation was between a woman and a man in the white robe of a Christian priest. They were standing at the door of a large house; and close to the wall, in the shadow of the porch of a building opposite, stood a youth, his hair covered by the hood of a long caracalla, listening with breathless attention.

This was Alexander.

He had been standing here for some time already, waiting for the return of Agatha, the fair Christian whom he had followed across the lake, and who had vanished into that house under the guidance of a deaconess. The door had not long closed on them when several men had also been admitted, whom he could not distinguish in the darkness, for the street was narrow and the moon still low.

It was sheer folly—and yet he fancied that one of them was his father, for his deep, loud voice was precisely like that of Heron; and, what was even more strange, that of the man who answered him seemed to proceed from his brother Philip. But, at such an hour, he could more easily have supposed them to be on the top of Mount Etna than in this quarter of the town.

The impatient painter was very tired of waiting, so, seating himself on a feeding-manger for asses which stood in front of the adjoining house, he presently fell asleep. He was tired from the sleepless night he had last spent, and when he opened his eyes once more and looked down the street into which the moon was now shining, he did not know how long he had been slumbering. Perhaps the damsel he wanted to see had already left the house, and he must see her again, cost him what it might; for she was so amazingly like the dead Korinna whom he had painted, that he could not shake off the notion that perhaps—for, after Serapion's discourse, it seemed quite likely—perhaps he had seen the spirit of the departed girl.

He had had some difficulty in persuading Glaukias, who had come across the lake with him, to allow him to follow up the fair vision unaccompanied; and his entreaties and prohibitions would probably alike have proved vain, but that Glaukias had taken it into his head to show his latest work, which a slave was carrying, to some friends over a jar of wine. It was a caricature of Cæsar, whom he had seen at the Kanopic Gate, modeled while he was in the house of Polybius, with a few happy touches.

When Alexander woke, he crept into the shadow of the porch opposite to the house into which Korinna's double had disappeared, and he now had no lack of entertainment. A man came out of the tall white house and looked into the street, and the moonlight enabled the artist to see all that took place.

The tall youth who had come to the door wore the robe of a Christian priest. Still, it struck Alexander that he was too young for such a calling; and he soon detected that he was certainly not what he seemed, but that there was some treachery in the



wind; for no sooner had a woman joined him, whom he evidently expected, than she blamed him for his want of caution. To this he laughingly replied that he was too hot in his disguise, and, pulling out a false beard, he showed it to the woman, who was dressed as a Christian deaconess, exclaiming, "That will do it!"

He went on to tell her, in a quick, low tone, much of which escaped the listener, that Serapion had dared much that day, and that the performance had ended badly, for that the Christian girl he had so cleverly persuaded to come from the other side of the lake had taken fright, and had insisted on knowing where she was.

At this the deaconess seemed somewhat dismayed, and poured out endless questions in a low voice. He, however, cast all the blame on the philosopher, whom his master had got hold of the day before. Then, as the woman desired more particular information, he briefly told her the story.

The fair Agatha, he said, after being invited by him, at noon, in the name of Bishop Demetrius, to a meeting that evening, had reached the ferry-house at about sunset. She had been told that many things of immediate importance were to be announced to the maidens of the Christian congregation; more especially, a discussion was to be held as to the order issued by the prefect for their taking part in a procession in Cæsar's honor when he should quit Alexandria. Old Dorothea had met the girl at the ferry-house, and had brought her hither. The woman who had attended her across the lake was certainly none of the wisest, for Dorothea had easily persuaded her to remain in her house during the meeting.

"Once there," the sham priest went on, "the

girl's waiting-woman must have had some dose in wine or sirup and water, for she is fast asleep at this moment in the ferry-house, or wherever Dorothea took her, as she could not be allowed to wake under Dorothea's roof.

"Thus every one was out of the way who could make any mischief; and when the Syrian, dressed as a Christian priest, had explained to Agatha what the patriarch required of his maidens, I led her on to the stage, on which the spectators were to see the ghosts through a small opening.

"The Syrian had desired her to put up so many and such prayers for the congregation in its peril from Cæsar; and, by Aphrodite! she was as docile as a lamb. She fell on her knees, and with hands and eyes to heaven entreated her god. But hark! Did you hear anything? Something is stirring within. Well, I have nearly done.

"The philosopher was to see her thus, and when he had gazed at her as if bewitched for some little time through the small window, he suddenly cried out, 'Korinna! Korinna!' and all sorts of nonsense, although Serapion had strictly forbidden him to utter a sound. Of course, the curtain instantly dropped. But Agatha had heard him call, and in a great fright she wanted to know where she was, and asked to go home.—Serapion was really grand. You should have heard how the fox soothed the dove, and at the same time whispered to me what you now are to do!"

"I?" said the woman, with some annoyance. "If he thinks that I will risk my good name in the congregation for the sake of his long beard—"

"Just be quiet," said Castor, in a pacifying tone. "The master's beard has nothing to do with the case, but something much more substantial. Ten

solidi, full weight, shall be yours if you will take Agatha home with you, or safe across the lake again, and pretend to have saved her from mystics or magicians who have decoyed her to some evil end. She knows you as a Christian deaconess, and will go with you at once. If you restore her to her father, he is rich, and will not send you empty away. Tell him that you heard her voice out in the street, and with the help of a worthy old man—that am I—rescued her from any peril you may invent. If he asks you where the heroic deed was done, name any house you please, only not this. Your best plan is to lay it all on the shoulders of Hananja, the thaumaturgist; we have owed him a grudge this many a day. However, I was not to teach you any lesson, for your wits are at least a match for ours.”

“Flattery will not win me,” the woman broke in. “Where is the gold?”

Castor handed her the solidi wrapped in a papyrus leaf, and then added :

“Stay one moment ! I must remove this white robe. The girl must on no account recognize me. I am going to force my way into the house with you—you found me in the street, an old man, a total stranger, and appealed to me for help. No harm is done, nothing lost but Dorothea’s credit among the Christians. We may have to get her safe out of the town. I must escort you and Agatha, for nothing unpleasant must happen to her on the way home. The master is imperative on that point, and so much beauty will certainly not get through the crowded streets without remark. And for my part, I, of course, am thinking of yours.”

Here Castor laughed aloud, and rolled the white robe into a bundle. Alexander peeped out of his nook

and shook his head in amazement, for the supple youth, who a moment before stood stalwart and upright, had assumed, with a bent attitude and a long, white beard hastily placed on his chin, the aspect of a weary, poor old man.

"I will give you a lesson!" muttered Alexander to himself, and he shook his fist at the intriguing rascal as he vanished into the house with the false deaconess.

So Serapion was a cheat! And the supposed ghost of Korinna was a Christian maiden who was being shamefully deluded. But he would keep watch over her, and bring that laughing villain to account. The first aim of his life was not to lose sight of Agatha. His whole happiness, he felt, depended on that. The gods had, as it were, raised her from the dead for him; in her, everything that he most admired was united; she was the embodiment of everything he cared for and prized; every feeling sank into the shade beside the one desire to make her his. She was, at this moment, the universe to him; and all else—the pursuers at his heels, his father, his sister, pretty Ino, to whom he had vowed his love only the night before—had ceased to exist for him.

Possessed wholly by the thought of her, he never took his eyes off the door opposite; and when at last the maiden came out with the deaconess, whom she called Elizabeth, and with Castor, Alexander followed the ill-matched trio; and he had to be brisk, for at first they hurried through the streets as though they feared to be overtaken. He carefully kept close to the houses on the shady side, and when they presently stopped, so did he.

The deaconess inquired of Agatha whither she would be taken. But when the girl replied that she

must go back to her own boat, waiting at the ferry, and return home, the deaconess represented that this was impossible by reason of the drunken seamen, who at this hour made the strand unsafe; she could only advise Agatha to come home with her and remain till daybreak. "This kind old man," and she pointed to Castor, "would no doubt go and tell the oarsmen that they were not to be uneasy at her absence."

The two women stood talking in the broad moonlight, and the pale beams fell on Agatha's beautiful unveiled features, giving them that unearthly, corpse-like whiteness which Alexander had tried to represent in his picture of Korinna. Again the thought that she was risen from the dead sent a chill through his blood—that she would make him follow her, perhaps to the tomb she had quitted. He cared not! If his senses had cheated him—if, in spite of what he had heard, that pale, unspeakably lovely image were indeed a lamia, a goblin shape from Hecate's dark abode, yet would he follow wherever she might lead, as to a festival, only to be with her.

Agatha thanked the deaconess, and as she spoke raised her eyes to the woman's face; and they were two large, dark orbs sparkling through tears, and as unlike as possible to the eyes which a ghost might snatch from their sockets to fling like balls or stones in the face of a pursuer. Oh, if only those eyes might look into his own as warmly and gratefully as they now gazed into the face of that treacherous woman!

He had a hard struggle with himself to subdue the impulse to put an end, now and here, to the fiendish tricks which guile was playing on the purest innocence; but the street was deserted, and if he had to

struggle with the bent old man, whose powerful and supple limbs he had already seen, and if the villain should plant a knife in his ribs—for as a wrestler he felt himself his match—Agatha would be bereft of a protector and wholly in the deceiver's power.

This, at any rate, must not be; and he even controlled himself when he heard the music of her words, and saw her grasp the hand of the pretended graybeard, who, with an assumption of paternal kindness, dared to kiss her hair, and then helped her to draw her kerchief over her face. The street of Hermes, he explained, where the deaconess dwelt, was full of people, and the divine gift of beauty, wherewith Heaven had blessed her, would attract the baser kind, as a flame attracts bats and moths. The hypocrite's voice was full of unction; the deaconess spoke with pious gravity. He could see that she was a woman of middle age, and he asked himself with rising fury whether the gods were not guilty who had lent mean wretches like these such winning graces as to enable them to lay traps for the guileless? For, in fact, the woman's face was well-favored, gentle, and attractive.

Alexander never took his gaze off Agatha, and his artist-eye reveled in her elastic step and her slender, shapely form. Above all, he was bewitched by the way her head was set, with a little forward bend; and as long as the way led through the silent lanes he was never weary of comparing her with lovely images—with a poppy, whose flower bows the stem; with a willow, whose head leans over the water; with the huntress Artemis, who, chasing in the moonlight, bends to mark the game.

Thus, unwearied and unseen, he had followed them as far as the street of Hermes; there his task became more difficult, for the road was swarming

with people. The older men were walking in groups of five or six, going to or coming from some evening assembly, and talking as they walked; or priests and temple servants on their way home, tired from night services and ceremonies; but the greater number were young men and boys, some wearing wreaths, and all more or less intoxicated, with street-wench on the lookout for a companion or surrounded by suitors, and trying to attract a favorite or dismiss the less fortunate.

The flare of the torches which illuminated the street was mirrored in eager eyes glowing with wine and passion, and in the glittering weapons of the Roman soldiery. Most of these were attached to Cæsar's train. As in the field, so in the peaceful town, they aimed at conquest, and many a Greek sulkily resigned his claims to some fickle beauty in favor of an irresistible tribune or centurion. Where the courteous Alexandrians made way, they pushed in or thrust aside whatever came in their path, securely confident of being Cæsar's favorite protectors, and unassailable while he was near. Their coarse, barbaric tones shook the air, and reduced the Greeks to silence; for, even in his drunken and most reckless moods, the Greek never lost his subtle refinement. The warriors rarely met a friendly glance from the eye of a native; still, the gold of these lavish revelers was as welcome to the women as that of a fellow-countryman.

The blaze of light shone, too, on many a fray, such as flared up in an instant whenever Greek and Roman came into contact. The lictors and town-watch could generally succeed in parting the combatants, for the orders of the authorities were that they should in every case side with the Romans.

The shouts and squabbling of men, the laughing

and singing of women, mingled with the word of command. Flutes and lyres, cymbals and drums, were heard from the trellised tavern arbors and cook-shops along the way; and from the little temple to Aphrodite, where Melissa had promised to meet the Roman physician next morning, came the laughter and song of unbridled lovers. As a rule, the Kanopic Way was the busiest and gayest street in the town; but on this night the street of Hermes had been the most popular, for it led to the Serapeum, where Cæsar was lodged; and from the temple poured a tide of pleasure-seekers, mingling with the flood of humanity which streamed on to catch a glimpse of imperial splendor, or to look at the troops encamped on the space in front of the Serapeum. The whole street was like a crowded fair; and Alexander had several times to follow Agatha and her escort out into the roadway, quitting the shelter of the arcade, to escape a party of rioters or the impertinent addresses of strangers.

The sham old man, however, was so clever at making way for the damsel, whose face and form were effectually screened by her kerchief from the passers-by, that Alexander had no opportunity for offering her his aid, or proving his devotion by some gallant act. That it was his duty to save her from the perils of spending a whole night under the protection of this venal deceiver and her worthless colleague, he had long since convinced himself; still, the fear of bringing her into a more painful position by attracting the attention of the crowd if he were to attack her escort, kept him back.

They had now stopped again under the colonnade, on the left-hand side of the road. Castor had taken the girl's hand, and, as he bade her good-night, promised, in emphatic tones, to be with her again



very early and escort her to the lake. Agatha thanked him warmly. At this a storm of rage blew Alexander's self-command to the four winds, and, before he knew what he was doing, he stood between the rascal and the Christian damsel, snatched their hands asunder, gripping Castor's wrist with his strong right hand, while he held Agatha's firmly in his left, and exclaimed:

"You are being foully tricked, fair maid; the woman, even, is deceiving you. This fellow is a base villain!"

And, releasing the arm which Castor was desperately but vainly trying to free from his clutch, he snatched off the false beard.

Agatha, who had also been endeavoring to escape from his grasp, gave a shriek of terror and indignation. The unmasked rogue, with a swift movement, snatched the hood of the caracalla off Alexander's head, flew at his throat with the fury and agility of a panther, and with much presence of mind called for help. And Castor was strong too: while Alexander tried to keep him off with his right hand, holding on to Agatha with his left, the shouts of the deaconess and her accomplice soon collected a crowd. They were instantly surrounded by an inquisitive mob, laughing or scolding the combatants, and urging them to fight or beseeching them to separate. But just as the artist had succeeded in twisting his opponent's wrist so effectually as to bring him to his knees, a loud voice of malignant triumph, just behind him, exclaimed:

"Now we have snared our scoffer! The fox should not stop to kill the hare when the hunters are at his heels!"

"Zminis!" gasped Alexander. He understood in a flash that life and liberty were at stake.

Like a stag hemmed in by dogs, he turned his head to this side and that, seeking a way of escape; and when he looked again where his antagonist had stood, the spot was clear; the nimble rascal had taken to his heels and vanished among the throng. But a pair of eyes met the painter's gaze, which at once restored him to self-possession, and reminded him that he must collect his wits and presence of mind. They were those of his sister Melissa, who, as she made her way onward with her companion, had recognized her brother's voice. In spite of the old woman's earnest advice not to mix in the crowd, she had pushed her way through, and, as the men-at-arms dispersed the mob, she came nearer to her favorite but too reckless brother.

Alexander still held Agatha's hand. The poor girl herself, trembling with terror, did not know what had befallen her. Her venerable escort was a young man—a liar. What was she to think of the deaconess, who was his confederate; what of this handsome youth who had unmasked the deceiver, and saved her perhaps from some fearful fate?

As in a thunder-storm flash follows flash, so, in this dreadful night, one horror had followed another, to bewilder the brain of a maiden who had always lived a quiet life among good and quiet men and women. And now the guardians of the peace had laid hands on the man who had so bravely taken her part, and whose bright eyes had looked into her own with such truth and devotion. He was to be dragged to prison; so he, too, no doubt, was a criminal. At this thought she tried to release her hand, but he would not let it go; for the deaconess had come close to Agatha, and, in a tone of sanctimonious wrath, desired her to quit this scene of scandal, and follow her under her peaceful roof.

What was she to do? Terrified and undecided, with deceit on one hand and on the other peril and perhaps disaster, she looked first at Elizabeth and then at Alexander, who, in spite of the threats of the man-at-arms, gazed in turns at her and at the spot where his sister had stood.

The lictors who were keeping off the mob had stopped Melissa too; but while Alexander had been gazing into Agatha's imploring eyes, feeling as though all his blood had rushed to his heart and face, Melissa had contrived to creep up close to him. And again the sight of her gave him the composure he so greatly needed. He knew, indeed, that the hand which still held Agatha's would in a moment be fettered, for Zminis had ordered his slaves to bring fresh ropes and chains, since they had already found use for those they had first brought out. It was to this circumstance alone that he owed it that he still was free. And, above all things, he must warn Agatha against the deaconess, who would fain persuade her to go with her.

It struck his alert wit that Agatha would trust his sister rather than himself, whom the Egyptian had several times abused as a criminal; and seeing the old woman of Polybius's household making her way up to Melissa, out of breath, indeed, and with disordered hair, he felt light dawn on his soul, for this worthy woman was a fresh instrument to his hand. She must know Agatha well, if the girl were indeed the daughter of Zeno.

He lost not an instant. With swift decision, while Zminis and his men were disputing as to whither they should conduct the traitor as soon as the fetters were brought, he released the maiden's hand, placing it in Melissa's, and exclaiming:

"This is my sister, the betrothed of Diodoros,

Polybius's son—your neighbor, if you are the daughter of Zeno. She will take care of you."

Agatha had at once recognized the old nurse, and when she confirmed Alexander's statement, and the Christian looked in Melissa's face, she saw beyond the possibility of doubt an innocent woman, whose heart she might fully trust.

She threw her arm round Melissa, as if to lean on her, and the deaconess turned away with well-curbed wrath and vanished into an open door.

All this had occupied but a very few minutes; and when Alexander saw the two beings he most loved in each other's embrace, and Agatha rescued from the deceiver and in safe keeping, he drew a deep breath, saying to his sister, as if relieved from a heavy burden:

"Her name is Agatha, and to her, the image of the dead Korinna, my life henceforth is given. Tell her this, Melissa."

His impassioned glance sought that of the Christian; and when she returned it, blushing, but with grateful candor, his mirthful features beamed with the old reckless jollity, and he glanced again at the crowd about him.

What did he see there? Melissa observed that his whole face was suddenly lighted up; and when Zminis signed to the man who was making his way to the spot holding up the rope, Alexander began to sing the first words of a familiar song. In an instant it was taken up by several voices, and then, as if from an echo, by the whole populace.

It was the chant by which the lads in the Gymnasium of Timagetes were wont to call on each other for help when they had a fray with those of the Gymnasium of the Dioscuri, with whom they had a chronic feud. Alexander had caught sight

of his friends Jason and Pappus, of the sculptor Glaukias, and of several other fellow-artists; they understood the appeal, and, before the night-watch could use the rope on their captive, the troop of young men had forced their way through the circle of armed men under the leadership of Glaukias, had surrounded Alexander, and run off with him in their midst, singing and shouting.

"Follow him! Catch him! Stop him!—living or dead, bring him back! A price is on his head—a splendid price to any one who will take him!" cried the Egyptian, foaming with rage and setting the example. But the youth of the town, many of whom knew the artist, and who were at all times ready to spoil sport for the sycophants and spies, crowded up between the fugitive and his pursurers and barred the way.

The lictors and their underlings did indeed, at last, get through the solid wall of shouting and scolding men and women; but by that time the troop of artists had disappeared down a side street.

## CHAPTER XI.

MELISSA, too, would probably have found herself a prisoner, but that Zminis, seeing himself balked of a triumph, and beside himself with rage, rushed after the fugitive with the rest. She had no further occasion to seek the house where her lover was lying, for Agatha knew it well. Its owner, Proterius, was an illustrious member of the Christian community, and she had often been to see him with her father.

On their way the girls confided to each other what had brought them out into the streets at so unusual an hour; and when Melissa spoke of her companion's extraordinary resemblance to the dead daughter of Seleukus—which, no doubt, had been Alexander's inducement to follow her—Agatha told her that she had constantly been mistaken for her uncle's daughter, so early lost. She herself had not seen her cousin for some few years, for Seleukus had quarreled with his brother's family when they had embraced Christianity. The third brother, Timotheus, the high-priest of Serapis, had proved more placable, and his wife Euryale was of all women the one she loved best. And presently it appeared that Agatha, too, had lost her mother, and this drew the girls so closely together, that they clasped hands and walked on like sisters or old and dear friends.

They were not kept long waiting outside the house of Proterius, for Andreas was in the vestibule arranging the litter for the conveyance of Diodoros, with the willing help of Ptolemæus. The freedman was indeed amazed when he heard Melissa's voice, and blamed her for this fresh adventure. However, he was glad to see her, for, although it seemed almost beyond the bounds of possibility, he had already fancied more than once, as steps had approached and passed, that she must surely be coming to lend him a helping hand.

It was easy to hear in his tone of voice that her bold venture was at least as praiseworthy as it was blameworthy in his eyes, and the grave man was as cheerful as he commonly was only when among his flowers. Never before had Melissa heard a word of compliment from his lips, but as Agatha stood with one arm round Melissa's shoulders, he said to the physician, as he pointed to the pair, "Like two roses on one stem!"

He had good reason, indeed, to be content. Diodoros was no worse, and Galen was certainly expected to visit the sick in the Serapeum. He regarded it, too, as a dispensation from Heaven that Agatha and Melissa should have happened to meet, and Alexander's happy escape had taken a weight from his mind. He willingly acceded to Melissa's request that he would take her and Agatha to see the sick man; but he granted them only a short time to gaze at the sleeper, and then requested the deaconess to find a room for the two damsels, who needed rest.

The worthy woman rose at once; but Melissa urgently entreated to be allowed to remain by her lover's side, and glanced anxiously at the keys in the matron's hand.

At this Andreas whispered to her: "You are afraid lest I should prevent your coming with us? But it is not so; and, indeed, of what use would it be? You made your way past the guards to the senator's coach; you came across the lake, and through the darkness and the drunken rabble in the streets; if I were to lock you in, you would be brave enough to jump out of the window. No, no; I confess you have conquered my objections—indeed, if you should now refuse your assistance, I should be obliged to crave it. But Ptolemæus wishes to leave Diodoros quite undisturbed till day-break. He is now gone to the Serapeum to find a good place for him. You, too, need rest, and you shall be waked in good time. Go, now, with Dame Katharine.—As to your relations," he added, to Agatha, "do not be uneasy. A boy is already on his way to your father, to tell him where you are for the night."

The deaconess led the two girls to a room where there was a large double bed. Here the new friends stretched their weary limbs; but, tired as they were, neither of them seemed disposed to sleep; they were so happy to have found each other, and had so much to ask and tell each other! As soon as Katharine had lighted a three-branched lamp she left them to themselves, and then their talk began.

Agatha, clinging to her new friend, laid her head on Melissa's shoulder; and as Melissa looked on the beautiful face, and remembered the fond passion which her heedless brother had conceived for its twin image, or as now and again the Christian girl's loving words appealed to her more especially, she stroked the long, flowing tresses of her brown hair.

It needed, indeed, no more than a common feeling, an experience gone through together, an hour



of confidential solitude, to join the hearts of the two maidens; and as they awaited the day, shoulder to shoulder in uninterrupted chat, they felt as though they had shared every joy and sorrow from the cradle. Agatha's weaker nature found a support in the calm strength of will which was evident in many things Melissa said; and when the Christian opened her tender and pitying heart to Melissa with touching candor, it was like a view into a new but most inviting world.

Agatha's extreme beauty, too, struck the artist's daughter as something divine, and her eye often rested admiringly on her new friend's pure and regular features.

When Agatha inquired of her about her father, Melissa briefly replied, that since her mother's death he was often moody and rough, but that he had a good, kind heart. The Christian girl, on the contrary, spoke with enthusiasm of the warm, human loving-kindness of the man to whom she owed her being; and the picture she drew of her home life was so fair, that the little heathen could hardly believe in its truth. Her father, Agatha said, lived in constant warfare with the misery and suffering of his fellow-creatures, and he was, in fact, able to make those about him happy and prosperous. The poorest were dearest to his loving heart, and on his estate across the lake he had collected none but the sick and wretched. The care of the children was left to her, and the little ones clung to her as if she were their mother. She had neither brother nor sister.—And so the conversation turned on Alexander, of whom Agatha could never hear enough.

And how proud was Melissa to speak of the bright young artist, who till now had been the sun of her joyless life! There was much that was good

to be said about him : for the best masters rated his talent highly in spite of his youth ; his comrades were faithful ; and none knew so well as he how to cheer his father's dark moods. Then, there were many amiable and generous traits of which she had been told, or had herself known. With his very first savings, he had had the Genius with a reversed torch cast in bronze to grace his mother's grave, and give his father pleasure. Once he had been brought home half dead after saving a woman and child from drowning, and vainly endeavoring to rescue another child. He might be wild and reckless, but he had always been faithful to his art and to his love for his family.

Agatha's eyes opened widely when Melissa told her anything good about her brother, and she clung in terror to her new friend as she heard of her excited orgy with her lover.

Scared as though some imminent horror threatened herself, she clasped Melissa's hand as she listened to the tale of the dangers Alexander had so narrowly escaped.

Such things had never before reached the ears of the girl in her retired Christian home beyond the lake ; they sounded to her as the tales of some bold seafarer to the peaceful husbandman on whose shores the storm has wrecked him.

"And do you know," she exclaimed, "all this seems delightful to me, though my father, I am sure, would judge it hardly ! When your brother risks his life, it is always for others, and that is right—that is the highest life. I think of him as an angel with a flaming sword. But you do not know our sacred scriptures."

Then Melissa would hear more of this book, of which Andreas had frequently spoken ; but there

was a knock at the door, and she sprang out of bed.

Agatha did the same ; and when a slave-girl had brought in fresh, cold water, she insisted on handing her friend the towels, on plaiting her long hair, pinning her *peplos* in its place, and arranging its folds. She had so often longed for a sister, and she felt as though she had found one in Melissa ! While she helped her to dress she kissed her preserver's sister on the eyes and lips, and entreated her with affectionate urgency to come to see her, as soon as she had done all she could for her lover. She must be made acquainted with her father, and Agatha longed to show her her poor children, her dogs, and her pigeons. And she would go to see Melissa, when she was staying with Polybius.

"And there," Melissa put in, "you will see my brother, too."

On which the Christian girl exclaimed : "You must bring him to our house. My father will be glad to thank him—" Here she paused, and then added, "Only he must not again risk his life so rashly."

"He will be well hidden at the house of Polybius," replied Melissa, consolingly. "And Andreas has him fast by this time."

She once more kissed Agatha, and went to the door, but her friend held her back, and whispered : "In my father's grounds there is a famous hiding-place, where no one would ever find him. It has often been a refuge for weeks and months for persecuted members of our faith. When he is seriously threatened, bring him to us. We will gladly provide for his safety, and all else. Only think, if they should catch him ! It would be for my sake, and I should never be happy again. Promise me that you will bring him."

"Yes, certainly," cried Melissa, as she hurried out into the vestibule, where Andreas and the leech were waiting for her.

They had done well to enlist the girl's services, for, since nursing her mother, she knew, as few did, how to handle the sick. It was not till they had fairly set out that Melissa observed that Dame Katharine was of the party; she had no doubt become reconciled to the idea of the sick man's removal to the Serapeum, for she had the same look of kindly calm which had so much attracted the girl at their first meeting.

The streets along which they passed in the pale morning light were now deserted, and a film of mist, behind which glowed the golden light of the newly risen sun, shrouded the horizon. The fresh air of morning was delicious, and at this early hour there was no one to avoid—only the peasants and their wives carrying the produce of their gardens and fields to market on asses, or wagons drawn by oxen. The black slaves of the town were sweeping the roadway. Here there were parties of men, women, and children on their way to work in factories, which were at rest but for a few hours in the bustling town. The bakers and other provision-dealers were opening their shops; the cobblers and metal-workers were already busy or lighting fires in their open stalls; and Andreas nodded to a file of slave-girls who had come across from the farm and gardens of Polybius, and who now walked up the street with large milk-jars and baskets of vegetables poised on their heads and supported with one gracefully raised arm.

They presently crossed the Aspendia Canal, where the fog hung over the water like white smoke, hiding the figure of the tutelary goddess

of the town on the parapet of the bridge from those who crossed by the roadway. The leaves of the mimosa-trees by the quay—nay, the very stones of the houses and the statues, wet with the morning dew—looked revived and newly washed; and a light breeze brought up from the Serapeum broken tones of the chant, sung there every morning by a choir of priests, to hail the triumph of light over darkness.

The crisp morning air was as invigorating to Melissa as her cold bath had been, after a night which had brought her so little rest. She felt as though she, and all Nature with her, had just crossed the threshold of a new day, bidding her to fresh life and labor. Now and then a flame from Lucifer's torch swallowed up a stretch of morning mist, while the Hours escorted Phœbus Apollo, whose radiant diadem of beams was just rising above the haze; Melissa could have declared she saw them dancing forth before him and strewing the path of the sun with flowers. All this was beautiful—as beautiful as the priest's chant, the aromatic sweetness of the air, and the works of art in cast bronze or hewn marble which were to be seen on the bridge, on the temple to Isis and Anubis to the right of the street, under the colonnades of the handsomest houses, on the public fountains—in short, wherever the eye might turn. Her lover, borne before her in a litter, was on the way to the physician in whose hands lay the power to cure him. She felt as though Hope led the way.

Since love had blossomed in her breast her quiet life had become an eventful one. Most of what she had gone through had indeed filled her with alarms. Serious questions to which she had never given a thought had been brought before her; and yet, in

this brief period of anxiety she had gained the precious sense of youthfulness and of capacity for action when she had to depend on herself. The last few hours had revealed to her the possession of powers which only yesterday she had never suspected. She, who had willingly yielded to every caprice of her father's, and who, for love of her brothers, had always unresistingly done their bidding, now knew that she had a will of her own and strength enough to assert it; and this, again, added to her contentment this morning.

Alexander had told her, and old Dido, and Diodoros, that she was fair to look upon—but these all saw her with the eyes of affection; so she had always believed that she was a well-looking girl enough, but by no means highly gifted in any respect—a girl whose future would be to bloom and fade unknown in her father's service. But now she knew that she was indeed beautiful; not only because she had heard it repeatedly in the crowd of yesterday, or even because Agatha had declared it while braiding her hair—an inward voice affirmed it, and for her lover's sake she was happy to believe it.

As a rule, she would have been ready to drop with fatigue after so many sleepless hours and such severe exertions; but to-day she felt as fresh as the birds in the trees by the roadside, which greeted the sun with cheerful twitterings.

"Yes, the world is indeed fair!" thought she; but at that very moment Andreas's grave voice was heard ordering the bearers to turn down a dark side alley which led into the street of Hermes, a few hundred paces from the Rhakotis Canal.

How anxious the good man looked! Her world was not the world of the Christian freedman; that

she plainly understood when the litter in which Diodoros lay was carried into one of the houses in the side street.

It was a large, plain building, with only a few windows, and those high up—in fact, as Melissa was presently informed, it was a Christian church. Before she could express her surprise, Andreas begged her to have a few minutes' patience; the daimons of sickness were here to be exorcised and driven out of the sufferer. He pointed to a seat in the vestibule to the church, a wide but shallow room. Then, at a sign from Andreas, the slaves carried the litter into a long, low hall with a flat roof.

From where she sat, Melissa could now see that a Christian in priest's robes, whom they called the exorcist, spoke various invocations over the sick man, the others listening so attentively that even she began to hope for some good effect from these incomprehensible formulas; and at the same time she remembered that her old slave-woman Dido, who worshiped many gods, wore round her neck, besides a variety of heathen amulets, a little cross which had been given her by a Christian woman. To her question why she, a heathen, wore this about her, the old woman replied, "You can never tell what may help you some day." So perhaps these exorcisms might not be without some effect on her lover, particularly as the God of the Christians must be powerful and good.

She herself strove to uplift her soul in prayer to the manes of her lost mother; but the scene going on around her in the vestibule distracted her mind with horror. Men, young and old, were slashing themselves with vehement scourgings on their backs. One white-haired old man, indeed, handed

his whip of hippopotamus-hide to a stalwart lad whose shoulders were streaming with blood, and begged him as a brother, as fervently as though it were the greatest favor, to let him feel the lash. But the younger man refused, and she saw the weak old fellow trying to apply it to his own back.

All this was quite beyond her comprehension, and struck her as disgusting; and how haggard and hideous were the limbs of these people who thus sinned against their own bodies—the noble temples of the Divine Spirit!

When, a few minutes later, the litter was borne out of the church again, the sun had triumphed over the mists and was rising with blinding splendor in the cloudless sky. Everything was bathed in light; but the dreadful sight of the penitents had cast a gloom over the clear gladness she had been so full of but just now. It was with a sense of oppression that she took leave of the deaconess, who left her with cheerful contentment in the street of Hermes, and followed the litter to the open square in front of the Serapeum.

Here every thought of gloom vanished from her mind as at the touch of a magician, for before her stood the vast Temple of Serapis, founded, as it were, for eternity, on a substructure of rock and closely fitted masonry, the noblest building on earth of any dedicated to the gods. The great cupola rose to the blue sky as though it fain would greet the sister vault above with its own splendor, and the copper-plating which covered it shone as dazzling as a second sun. From the wide front of the temple, every being to whom the prayers and worship of mortals could be offered looked down on her, hewn in marble or cast in bronze; for on the roof, on brackets or on pedestals, in niches or as



supporting the parapets and balconies, were statues of all the guests at the Olympian banquet, with images or busts of every hero or king, philosopher, poet, or artist whose deeds or works had earned him immortality.

From infancy Melissa had looked up at this temple with admiration and pride, for here every art had done its utmost to make it without parallel on earth. It was the work of her beloved native city, and her mother had often taken her into the Serapeum, where she herself had found comfort in many a sorrow and disappointment, and had taught the child to love it. That it had afterward been spoiled for her she forgot in her present mood.

Never had she seen the great temple surrounded by so much gay and busy life. The front of the building, toward the square, had in the early hours of the morning been decked with garlands and heavy wreaths of flowers, by a swarm of slaves standing on ladders and planks and benches let down from the roof by ropes. The inclined ways, by which vehicles drove up to the great door, were still deserted, and on the broad steps in the middle no one was to be seen as yet but a few priests in gala robes, and court officials; but the immense open space in front of the sanctuary was one great camp, where, among the hastily pitched canvas tents, horses were being dressed and weapons polished. Several maniples of the prætorians and of the Macedonian phalanx were already drawn up in compact ranks, to relieve guard at the gate of the imperial residence, and stand at Cæsar's orders.

But more attractive to the girl than all this display were a number of altars which had been erected at the extreme edge of the great square, and on each of which a fire was burning. Heavy clouds of

smoke went up from them in the still, pure atmosphere, like aerial columns, while the flames, paling in the beams of the morning sun, flew up through the reek as though striving to rise above it, with wan and changeful gleams of red and yellow, now curling down, and now writhing upward like snakes. Of all these fires there was not one from which the smoke did not mount straight to heaven, though each burned to a different god; and Melissa regarded it as a happy sign that none spread or failed to rise. The embers were stirred from time to time by the priests and augurs of every god of the East and West, who also superintended the sacrifices, while warriors of every province of the empire stood round in prayer.

Melissa passed by all these unwonted and soul-stirring sights without a regret; her hope for the cure soon to be wrought on her lover cast all else into the shade. Still, while she looked around at the thousands who were encamped here, and gazed up at the temple where so many men were busied, like ants, it struck her that in fact all this belonged to one and was done for one alone. Those legions followed him as the dust follows the wind, the whole world trembled at his nod, and in his hand lay the life and happiness of the millions he governed. And it was at this omnipotent being, this god in human form, that her brother had mocked; and the pursuers were at his heels. This recollection troubled her joy, and when she looked in the freedman's grave and anxious face her heart began to beat heavily again.

## CHAPTER XII.

MELISSA had supposed that, according to custom, the litter would be carried up the incline or the steps, and into the Serapeum by the great door; but in consequence of the emperor's visit this could not be. The sick man was borne round the eastern side of the huge building, which covered a space on which a whole village might have stood. The door at the back, to the south, through which he was finally admitted, opened into a gallery passing by the great quadrangle where sacrifice was made, and leading to the inner rooms of the temple, to the cubicles among others.

In these it was revealed to the sick in dreams by what means or remedies they might hope to be healed; and there was no lack of priests to interpret the visions, nor of physicians who came hither to watch peculiar cases, to explain to the sufferers the purport of the counsel of the gods—often very dark—or to give them the benefit of their own.

One of these, a friend of Ptolemæus, who, though he had been secretly baptized, still was one of the *pastophori* of the temple, was awaiting the little party, and led the way as guide.

The bellowing of beasts met them on the very threshold. These were to be slaughtered at this early hour by the special command of Caracalla; and, as Cæsar himself had promised to be present at the

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sacrificial rites, none but the priests or "Cæsar's friends" were admitted to the court-yard. The litter was therefore carried up a staircase and through a long hall forming part of the library, with large windows looking down on the open place where the beasts were killed and the entrails examined. Diodoros saw and heard nothing, for the injury to the skull had deprived him of all consciousness; Ptolemæus, however, to soothe Melissa, assured her that he was sleeping soundly.

As they mounted the stairs she had kept close to her lover's side; but on this assurance she lingered behind and looked about her.

As the little procession entered the gallery, in which the rolls of manuscript lay in stone or wooden cases on long rows of shelves, the shout was heard of "Hail, Cæsar!" mingling with a solemn chant, and announcing the sovereign's approach.

At this the physician pointed to the court-yard, and said to the girl, whose beauty had greatly attracted him: "Look down there if you want to see Cæsar. We must wait here, at any rate, till the crowd has gone past in the corridor beyond that door." And Melissa, whose feminine curiosity had already tempted her to the window, looked down into the quadrangle and on to the steps down which a maniple of the prætorian guard were marching, with noble Romans in togas or the uniform of legates, augurs wearing wreaths, and priests of various orders. Then for a few minutes the steps were deserted, and Melissa thought she could hear her own heart beating, when suddenly the cry "Hail, Cæsar!" was again heard, loud trumpets rang out and echoed from the high stone walls which surrounded the inclosure, and Caracalla appeared on the broad marble steps which led down into the court of sacrifice.

Melissa's eyes were riveted as if spell-bound on this figure, which was neither handsome nor dignified, and which nevertheless had a strange attraction for her, she knew not why. What was it in this man, who was short rather than tall, and feeble rather than majestic, which so imperatively forbade all confident advances? The noble lion which walked by his side, and in whose mane his left hand was buried, was not more unapproachable than he. He called this terrible creature, which he treated with as much familiarity as if it were a lapdog, his "Persian sword"; and as Melissa looked she remembered what fate might be in store for her brother through this man, and all the crimes of which he was accused by the world—the murders of his brother, of his wife, and of thousands besides.

For the first time in her life she felt that she could hate; she longed to bring down every evil on that man's head. The blood mounted to her cheeks, and her little fists were clinched, but she never took her eyes off him; for everything in his person impressed her, if not as fine, still as exceptional—if not as great, still as noteworthy.

She knew that he was not yet thirty, but yesterday, as he drove past her, he had looked like a surly misanthropist of more than middle age. To-day how young he seemed! Did he owe it to the laurel crown which rested on his head, or to the white toga which fell about him in ample folds, leaving only the sinewy arm bare by which he led the lion?

From where she stood she could only see his side-face as he came down the steps, and indeed it was not ill-favored; brow, nose, and chin were finely and nobly formed; his beard was thin, and a mustache curled over his lips. His eyes, deeply set under the brows, were not visible to her, but she

had not forgotten since yesterday their sinister and terrible scowl.

At this moment the lion crept closer to his master.

If only the brute should spring on that more blood-stained and terrible beast of prey who could kill not only with claws and teeth but with a word from his lips, a wave of his hand!—the world would be rid of the ferocious curse. Ay, his eye, which had yesterday scorned to look at the multitudes who had hailed his advent, was that of a cruel tyrant.

And then—she felt as if he must have guessed her thoughts—while he patted the lion and gently pushed him aside he turned his face full on her, and she knew not whether to be pleased or angry, for the odious, squinting eyes were not now terrible or contemptuous; nay, they had looked kindly on the beast, and with a somewhat suffering expression. The dreadful face of the murderer was not hideous now, but engaging—the face of a youth enduring torments of soul or of body.

She was not mistaken. On the very next step Caracalla stood still, pressed his right hand to his temples, and set his lips as if to control some acute pain. Then he sadly shook his head and gazed up at the walls of the court, which had been decorated in his honor with hangings and garlands of flowers. First he studied the frieze and the festal display on his right, and when he turned his head to look at the side where Melissa stood, an inward voice bade her withdraw, that the gaze of this monster might not blight her. But an irresistible attraction held her fast; then suddenly she felt as if the ground were sinking from under her feet, and, as a shipwrecked wretch snatches at a floating spar, she

clung to the little column at the left of the window, clutching it with her hand; for the dreadful thing had happened—Caracalla's eye had met hers and had even rested on her for a while! And that gaze had nothing bloodthirsty in it, nor the vile leer which had sparkled in the eyes of the drunken rioters she had met last night in the streets; he only looked astonished as at some wonderful thing which he had not expected to see in this place. But presently a fresh attack of pain apparently made him turn away, for his features betrayed acute suffering, as he slowly set his foot on the next step below.

Again, and more closely, he pressed his hand to his brow, and then beckoned to a tall, well-built man with flowing hair, who walked behind him, and accepted the support of his offered arm.

"Theocritus, formerly an actor and dancer," the priest whispered to Melissa. "Cæsar's whim made the mimic a senator, a legate, and a favorite."

But Melissa only knew that he was speaking, and did not take in the purport of his speech; for this man, slowly descending the steps, absorbed her whole sympathy. She knew well the look of those who suffer and conceal it from the eyes of the world; and some cruel disease was certainly consuming this youth, who ruled the earth, but whose purple robes would be snatched at soon enough by greedy hands if he should cease to seem strong and able. And now, again, he looked old and worn—poor wretch, who yet was so young and born to be so abundantly happy! He was, to be sure, a base and blood-stained tyrant, but not the less a miserable and unhappy man. The more severe the pain he had to endure, the harder must he find it to hide it from the crowd who were constantly about him.

There is but one antidote to hatred, and that is

pity; it was with the eager compassion of a woman's heart that Melissa marked every movement of the imperial murderer, as soon as she recognized his sufferings, and when their eyes had met. Nothing now escaped her keen glance which could add to her sympathy for the man she had loathed but a minute before. She noticed a slight limp in his gait and a convulsive twitching of his eyelids; his slender, almost transparent hand, she reflected, was that of a sick man, and pain and fever, no doubt, had thinned his hair, which had left many places bald.

And when the high-priest of Serapis and the augurs met him at the bottom of the steps and Cæsar's eye again put on the cruel scowl of yesterday, she would not doubt that it was stern self-command which gave him that threatening glare, to seem terrible, in spite of his anguish, to those whose obedience he required. He had really needed his companion's support as they descended the stair, that she could plainly see; and she had observed, too, how carefully his guide had striven to conceal the fact that he was upholding him; but the courtier was too tall to achieve the task he had set himself. Now, she was much shorter than Cæsar, and she was strong, too. Her arm would have afforded him a much better support.

But how could she think of such a thing?—she, the sister of Alexander, the betrothed of Diodoros, whom she truly loved!

Cæsar mingled with the priests, and her guide told her that the corridor was now free. She peeped into the litter, and, seeing that Diodoros still slept, she followed him, lost in thought, and giving short and heedless answers to Andreas and the physicians. She had not listened to the priest's infor-



mation, and scarcely turned her head to look out, when a tall, thin man with a bullet-head and deeply wrinkled brow was pointed out to her as Macrinus, the prefect of the body-guard, the most powerful man in Rome next to Cæsar; and then the "friends" of Caracalla, whom she had seen yesterday, and the historian Dion Cassius, with other senators and members of the imperial train.

Now, as they made their way through halls and passages where the foot of the uninitiated rarely intruded, she looked about her with more interest when the priest drew her attention to some particularly fine statue or picture, or some symbolical presentment. Even now, however, though association with her brothers had made her particularly alive to everything that was beautiful or curious, she glanced round with less interest than she otherwise might have done, for she had much else to think of. In the first place, of the benefits Diodoros was to derive from the great Galen; then of her father, who this day must dispense with her assistance; and, finally, of the state of mind of her grave brother Philip. He and Alexander, who usually were such united friends, now both were in love with Agatha, and what could come of that? And from time to time her thoughts flew back to Cæsar, and she felt as though some tie, she knew not what, linked them together.

As soon as the litter had to be carried up or down steps, she kept an eye on the bearers, and gave such help as was needed when the sleeper's position was changed. Whenever she looked in his handsome face, flushed as it was by fever and framed in tumbled curls, her heart swelled, and she felt that she had much to thank the gods for, seeing that her lover was so full of splendid youth and

in no respect resembled the prematurely decrepit and sickly wearer of the purple. Nevertheless, she thought a good deal of Caracalla, and it even occurred to her once that if it were he who was being carried instead of Diodoros, she would tend him no less carefully than her betrothed. Cæsar, who had been as far out of her ken as a god, and of whose overwhelming power she had heard, had suddenly come down to her. She involuntarily thought of him as one of those few with whom she had come into personal contact, and in whose weal or woe she had some sympathetic interest. He could not be altogether evil and hardened. If he could only know what pain it caused her to see him suffer, he would surely command Zminis to abandon the pursuit of her brother.

Just as they were reaching the end of their walk, the trumpets rang out once more, reminding her that she was under the same roof with him. She was so close to him—and yet how far he was from guessing the desires of a heart which beat with compassion for him!

Several sick persons, eager for some communication from the gods, and some who, without being sick, had slept in the Serapeum, had by this time left their beds, and were taking counsel in the great hall with interpreters and physicians. The bustle was like that of a market-place, and there was one old man with unkempt hair and fiery eyes who repeated again and again in a loud voice, "It was the god himself who appeared to me, and his three-headed dog licked my cheeks." And presently a hideous old woman plucked at Melissa's robe, whispering: "A healing draught for your lover; tears from the eyes of the infant Horus. I have them from Isis herself. The effect is rapid and certain.

Come to Hezron, the dealer in balsams in the street of the Nekropolis. Your lover's recovery—for five drachmæ."

But Melissa, who was no stranger here since her mother's last sickness, went on without pausing, following the litter down the long hall full of beds, a room with a stone roof resting on two rows of tall columns. Familiar to her too was the aromatic scent of kyphi,\* which filled the hall, although fresh air was constantly pouring in from outside through the high windows. Red and green curtains hung in front of them, and the subdued light which came through fell in tinted twilight on the colored pictures in relief of the history of the gods, which covered the walls. Speech was forbidden here, and their steps fell noiseless on the thick, heavy mats.

Most of the beds were already empty; only those between the long wall and the nearest row of columns were still for the most part occupied by the sick who sought the help of the god. On one of these Diodoros was laid, Melissa helping in silence, and with such skill as delighted even the physicians. Still, this did not wake him, though on the next bed lay a man who never ceased speaking, because in his dream he had been bidden to repeat the name of Serapis as many times as there were drops in a cup of water filled from the Agathodæmon Canal.

"A long stay in this strong perfume will be bad for him," whispered Ptolemæus to the freedman. "Galenus sent word that he would visit the sick early to-day; but he is not here yet. He is an old man, and in Rome, they say, it is the custom to sleep late."

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\* A mingled incense commonly used in the Egyptian temples, and also known to the Greeks; various recipes for it have come down to us from both sources.

He was interrupted by a stir in the long hall, which broke in on the silence, no one knew from whence; and immediately after, officious hands threw open the great double doors with a loud noise.

"He is coming," whispered their priestly guide; and the instant after an old man crossed the threshold, followed by a troop of pastophori, as obsequious as the courtiers at the heels of a prince.

"Gently, brothers," murmured the greatest physician of his age in a low voice, as, leaning on a staff, he went toward the row of couches. It was easy to see the traces of his eighty years, but his fine eyes still gleamed with youthful light.

Melissa blushed to think that she could have mistaken Serenus Samonicus for this noble old man. He must once have been a tall man; his back was bent and his large head was bowed as though he were forever seeking something. His face was pale and colorless, with a well-formed nose and mouth, but not of classic mold. Blue veins showed through the clear white skin, and the long, silky, silvery hair still flowed in unthinned waves round his massive head, bald only on the crown. A snowy beard fell over his breast. His aged form was wrapped in a long and ample robe of costly white woolen stuff, and his whole appearance would have been striking for its peculiar refinement, even if the eyes had not sparkled with such vivid and piercing keenness from under the thick brows, and if the high, smooth, slightly prominent forehead had not borne witness to the power and profundity of his mind. Melissa knew of no one with whom to compare him; he reminded Andreas of the picture of John as an old man, which a wealthy fellow-Christian had presented to the church of Saint Mark.

If this man could do nothing, there was no help on earth. And how dignified and self-possessed were the movements of this bent old man as he leaned on his staff! He, a stranger here, seemed to be showing the others the way, a guide in his own realm. Melissa had heard that the strong scent of the kyphi might prove injurious to Diodoros, and her one thought now was the desire that Galenus might soon approach his couch. He did not, in fact, begin with the sick nearest to the door, but stood awhile in the middle of the hall, leaning against a column and surveying the place and the beds.

When his searching glance rested on that where Diodoros was lying, an answering look met his with reverent entreaty from a pair of beautiful, large, innocent eyes. A smile parted his bearded lips, and going up to the girl he said: "Where beauty bids, even age must obey. Your lover, child, or your brother?"

"My betrothed," Melissa hastened to reply; and the maidenly embarrassment which flushed her cheek became her so well that he added:

"He must have much to recommend him if I allow him to carry you off, fair maid."

With these words he went up to the couch, and looking at Diodoros as he lay, he murmured, as if speaking to himself and without paying any heed to the younger men who crowded round him:

"There are no true Greeks left here; but the beauty of the ancestral race is not easily stamped out, and is still to be seen in their descendants. What a head, what features, and what hair!"

Then he felt the lad's breast, shoulders, and arms, exclaiming in honest admiration, "What a godlike form!"

He laid his delicate old hand, with its network of blue veins, on the sick man's forehead, again glanced round the room, and listened to Ptolemæus, who gave him a brief and technical report of the case; then, sniffing the heavy scent that filled the hall, he said, as the Christian leech ceased speaking:

"We will try; but not here—in a room less full of incense. This perfume brings dreams, but no less surely induces fever. Have you no other room at hand where the air is purer?"

An eager "Yes," in many voices was the reply; and Diodoros was forthwith transferred into a small cubicle adjoining.

While he was being moved, Galenus went from bed to bed, questioning the chief physician and the patients. He seemed to have forgotten Diodoros and Melissa; but after hastily glancing at some and carefully examining others, and giving advice where it was needful, he desired to see the fair Alexandrian's lover once more.

As he entered the room he nodded kindly to the girl. How gladly would she have followed him! But she said to herself that if he had wished her to be present he would certainly have called her; so she modestly awaited his return. She had to wait a long time, and the minutes seemed hours while she heard the voices of men through the closed door, the moaning and sighing of the sufferer, the splashing of water, and the clatter of metal instruments; and her lively imagination made her fancy that something almost unendurable was being done to her lover.

At last the physician came out. His whole appearance betokened perfect satisfaction. The younger men, who followed him, whispered among themselves, shaking their heads as though some

miracle had been performed; and every eye that looked on him was radiant with enthusiastic veneration. Melissa knew, as soon as his eyes met hers, that all was well, and as she grasped the old man's hand she concluded from its cool moisture that he had but just washed it, and had done with his own hand all that Ptolemæus had expected of his skill. Her eyes were dim with grateful emotion, and though Galenus strove to hinder her from pressing her lips to his hand she succeeded in doing so; he, however, kissed her brow with fatherly delight in her warm-hearted sweetness, and said:

"Now go home happy, my child. That stone had hit your lover's brain-roof a hard blow; the pressure of the broken beam—I mean a piece of bone—had robbed him of his consciousness of what a sweet bride the gods have bestowed on him. But the knife has done its work; the beam is in its place again; the splinters which were not needed have been taken out; the roof is mended, and the pressure removed. Your friend has recovered consciousness, and I will wager that at this moment he is thinking of you and wishes you were with him. But for the present you had better defer the meeting. For forty-eight hours he must remain in that little room, for any movement would only delay his recovery."

"Then I shall stay here to nurse him," cried Melissa, eagerly. But Galenus replied, decisively:

"That must not be if he is to get well. The presence of a woman for whom the sufferer's heart is on fire is as certain to aggravate the fever as the scent of incense. Besides, child, this is no place for such as you."

Her head drooped sadly, but he nodded to her cheerfully as he added:

"Ptolemæus, who is worthy of your entire confidence, speaks of you as a girl of much sense, and you will surely not do anything to spoil my work, which was not easy. However, I must say farewell; other sick require my care."

He held out his hand, but, seeing her eyes fixed on his and glittering through tears, he asked her name and family. It seemed to him of good augury for the long hours before him which he must devote to Cæsar, that he should, so early in the day, have met so pure and fair a flower of girlhood.

When she had told him her own name and her father's, and also mentioned her brothers, Philip the philosopher, and Alexander the painter, who was already one of the chief masters of his art here, Galenus answered heartily :

"All honor to his genius, then, for he is the one-eyed king in the land of the blind. Like the old gods, who can scarce make themselves heard for the new, the Muses too have been silenced. The many really beautiful things to be seen here are not new; and the new, alas! are not beautiful. But your brother's work," he added, kindly, "may be the exception."

"You should only see his portraits!" cried Melissa.

"Yours, perhaps, among them?" said the old man, with interest. "That is a reminder I would gladly take back to Rome with me."

Alexander had indeed painted his sister not long before, and how glad she was to be able to offer the picture to the reverend man to whom she owed so much! So she promised with a blush to send it him as soon as she should be at home again.

The unexpected gift was accepted with pleasure, and when he thanked her eagerly and with simple



heartiness, she interrupted him with the assurance that in Alexandria art was not yet being borne to the grave. Her brother's career, it was true, threatened to come to an untimely end, for he stood in imminent danger. On this the old man—who had taken his seat on a bench which the attendant physicians of the temple had brought forward—desired to know the state of the case, and Melissa briefly recounted Alexander's misdemeanor, and how near he had been, yesterday, to falling into the hands of his pursuers. Then she looked up at the old man beseechingly; and as he had praised her beauty, so now—she herself knew not how she had such courage—the praises of his fame, his greatness and goodness, flowed from her lips. And her bold entreaties ended with a prayer that he would urge Cæsar, who doubtless revered him as a father, to cease from prosecuting her brother.

The old man's face had grown graver and graver; he had several times stroked his white beard with an uneasy gesture; and when, as she spoke the last words, she ventured to raise her timidly downcast eyes to his, he rose stiffly and said in regretful tones:

"How can I be vexed with a sister who knocks at any door to save a brother's life? But I would have given a great deal that it had not been at mine. It is hard to refuse when I would so gladly accede, and yet so it must be; for, though Claudius Galenus does his best for Bassianus Antoninus as a patient, as he does for any other, Bassianus the man and the emperor is as far from him as fire from water; and so it must ever be during the short space of time which may yet be granted to him and me under the light of the sun."

The last words were spoken in a bitter, repellent

tone, and yet Melissa felt that it pained the old man to refuse her. So she earnestly exclaimed :

"Oh, forgive me! How could I guess—" She suddenly paused and added, "Then you really think that Cæsar has not long to live?"

She spoke with the most anxious excitement, and her question offended Galenus. He mistook their purport, and his voice was wrathful as he replied, "Long enough yet to punish an insult!"

Melissa turned pale. She fancied that she apprehended the meaning of these stern words, and, prompted by an earnest desire not to be misunderstood by this man, she eagerly exclaimed :

"I do not wish him dead—no, indeed not; not even for my brother's sake! But just now I saw him near, and I thought I could see that he was suffering great pain. Why, we pity a brute creature when it is in anguish. He is still so young, and it must be so hard to die!"

Galenus nodded approvingly, and replied :

"I thank you, in the name of my imperial patient. —Well, send me your portrait; but let it be soon, for I embark before sunset. I shall like to remember you. As to Cæsar's sufferings, they are so severe, your tender soul would not wish your worst enemy to know such pain. My art has few means of mitigating them, and the immortals are little inclined to lighten the load they have laid on this man. Of the millions who tremble before him, not one prays or offers sacrifice of his own free-will for the prosperity of the monarch."

A flash of enthusiasm sparkled in Melissa's eye, but Galenus did not heed it; he briefly bade her farewell and turned away to devote himself to other patients.

"There is one, at any rate," thought she, as she

looked after the physician, "who will pray and sacrifice for that unhappy man. Diodoros will not forbid it, I am sure."

She turned to Andreas and desired him to take her to her lover. Diodoros was now really sleeping, and did not feel the kiss she breathed on his forehead. He had all her love; the suffering criminal she only pitied.

When they had quitted the temple she pressed her hand to her bosom and drew a deep breath as if she had just been freed from prison.

"My head is quite confused," she said, "by the heavy perfume and so much anxiety and alarm; but O Andreas, my heart never beat with such joy and gratitude! Now I must collect my thoughts, and get home to do what is needful for Philip. And merciful gods! that good-natured old Roman, Samonicus, will soon be expecting me at the Temple of Aphrodite; see how high the sun is already. Let us walk faster, for, to keep him waiting—"

Andreas here interrupted her, saying, "If I am not greatly mistaken, there is the Roman, in that open chariot, coming down the incline."

He was right; a few minutes later the chariot drew up close to Melissa, and she managed to tell Samonicus all that had happened in so courteous and graceful a manner that, far from being offended, he could wish every success to the cure his great friend had begun. And indeed his promise had somewhat weighed upon his mind, for to carry out two undertakings in one day was too much, at his age, and he had to be present in the evening at a banquet to which Cæsar had invited himself in the house of Seleukus the merchant."

"The high-priest's brother?" asked Melissa, in

surprise, for death had but just bereft that house of the only daughter.

"The same," said the Roman, gayly. Then he gave her his hand, with the assurance that the thought of her would make it a pleasure to remember Alexandria.

As she clasped his hand, Andreas came up, bowed gravely, and asked whether it would be overbold in him, as a faithful retainer of the maiden's family, to crave a favor, in her name, of Cæsar's illustrious and familiar friend.

The Roman eyed Andreas keenly; and the manly dignity, nay, the defiant self-possession of the freed-man—the very embodiment of all he had expected to find in a genuine Alexandrian—so far won his confidence that he bade him speak without fear. He hoped to hear something sufficiently characteristic of the manners of the provincial capital to make an anecdote for Cæsar's table. Then, when he understood that the matter concerned Melissa's brother, and a distinguished artist, he smiled expectantly. Even when he learned that Alexander was being hunted down for some heedless jest against the emperor, he only threatened Melissa sportively with his finger; but on being told that this jest dealt with the murder of Geta, he seemed startled, and the tone of his voice betrayed serious displeasure as he replied to the petitioner, "Do you suppose that I have three heads, like the Cerberus at the feet of your god, that you ask me to lay one on the block for the smite of a pretty girl?"

He signed to his charioteer, and the horses whirled the light vehicle across the square and down the street of Hermes.

Andreas gazed after him, and muttered, with a shrug:

“ My first petition to a great man, and assuredly my last.”

“ The coward !” cried Melissa ; but Andreas said, with a superior smile :

“ Let us take a lesson from this, my child. Those who reckon on the help of man are badly off indeed. We must all trust in God, and each in himself.”

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### CHAPTER XIII.

ANDREAS, who had so much on his shoulders, had lost much time, and was urgently required at home. After gratifying Melissa's wish by describing how Diodoros had immediately recovered consciousness on the completion of the operation performed by Galen, and painting the deep amazement that had fallen on all the other physicians at the skill of this fine old man, he had done all he could for the present to be of use to the girl. He was glad, therefore, when in the street of Hermes, now swarming again with citizens, soldiers, and horsemen, he met the old nurse, who, after conducting Agatha home to her father, had been sent back to the town to remain in attendance, if necessary, on Diodoros. The freedman left it to her to escort Melissa to her own home, and went back to report to Polybius—in the first place, as to his son's state.

It was decided that Melissa should for the present remain with her father; but, as soon as Diodoros should be allowed to leave the Serapeum, she was to go across the lake to receive the convalescent on his return home.

The old woman assured her, as they walked on, that Diodoros had always been born to good luck; and it was clear that this had never been truer than now, when Galenus had come in the nick of time to restore him to life and health, and when he had won

such a bride as Melissa. Then she sang the praises of Agatha, of her beauty and goodness, and told her that the Christian damsel had made many inquiries concerning Alexander. She, the speaker, had not been chary of her praise of the youth, and, unless she was much mistaken, the arrow of Eros had this time pierced Agatha's heart, though till now she had been as a child—an innocent child—as she herself could say, who had seen her grow up from the cradle. Her faith need not trouble either Melissa or Alexander, for gentler and more modest wives than the Christian women were not to be found among the Greeks—and she had known many.

Melissa rarely interrupted the garrulous old woman; but, while she listened, pleasant pictures of the future rose before her fancy. She saw herself and Diodoros ruling over Polybius's household, and, close at hand, on Zeno's estate, Alexander with his beautiful and adored wife. There, under Zeno's watchful eye, the wild youth would become a noble man. Her father would often come to visit them, and in their happiness would learn to find pleasure in life again. Only now and then the thought of the sacrifice which the vehement Philip must make for his younger brother, and of the danger which still threatened Alexander, disturbed the cheerful contentment of her soul, rich as it was in glad hopes.

The nearer they got to her own home, the more lightly her heart beat. She had none but good news to report there. The old woman, panting for breath, was obliged to beg her to consider her sixty years and moderate her pace.

Melissa willingly checked her steps; and when, at the end of the street of Hermes, they reached the temple of the god from whom it was named and turned off to the right, the good woman parted

from her, for in this quiet neighborhood she could safely be trusted to take care of herself.

Melissa was now alone. On her left lay the gardens of Hermes, where, on the southern side, stood her father's house and that of their neighbor Skopas. Though the old nurse had indeed talked of nothing that was not pleasant, it was a comfort not to have to listen to her, but to be free to follow her own thoughts. Nor did she meet with anything to distract them, for at this hour the great public garden was left almost entirely to children and their attendants, or to the inhabitants of the immediate neighborhood who frequented the temples of Hermes or Artemis, or the little shrine of Asklepios, which stood in a grove of mimosas on the skirt of the park, and to which Melissa herself felt attracted. It had been a familiar spot at the time when her mother was at the worst. How often had she flown hither from her home near at hand to pour oil on the altar of the god of healing—to make some small offering and find comfort in prayer!

The day was now hot, she was tired, and, when she saw the white marble columns gleaming among the greenery, she yielded to the impulse to enjoy a few minutes' rest in the cool *cella* and accomplish the vow she had taken an hour or two since. She longed, indeed, to get home, that her father might share the happiness, which uplifted her heart; but then she reflected that she would not soon have the opportunity of carrying out, unobserved, the purpose she had in her mind. Now, if ever, was the time to offer sacrifice for Cæsar and for the mitigation of his sufferings. The thought that Galenus perhaps was right, and that of Caracalla's myriad subjects she might be the only one who would do so much for his sake, strengthened her resolve.



The chief temple of Asklepios, whom the Egyptians called Imhotep, was at the Serapeum. Imhotep was the son of Ptah, who, at Alexandria, was merged in Serapis. There he was worshiped, conjointly with Serapis and Isis, by Egyptians, Greeks, and Syrians alike. The little sanctuary near her father's house was the resort of none but Greeks. Ptolemæus Philadelphus, the second Macedonian King of Egypt, had built it as an appendage to the Temple of Artemis, after the recovery from sickness of his wife Arsinoë.

It was small, but a masterpiece of Greek art, and the statues of Sleep and of A Dream, at the entrance, with the marble group behind the altar, representing Asklepios with his sister Hygeia and his wife Epione the Soother, was reckoned by connoisseurs as among the noblest and most noteworthy works of art in Alexandria.

The dignity and benevolence of the god were admirably expressed in the features of the divinity, somewhat resembling the Olympian Zeus, who leaned on his serpent staff; and the graceful, inviting sweetness of Hygeia, holding out her cup as though she were offering health to the sufferer, was well adapted to revive the hopes of the despondent. The god's waving locks were bound with a folded scarf, and at his feet was a dog, gazing up at his lord as if in entreaty.

The sacred snakes lay coiled in a cage by the altar; they were believed to have the power of restoring themselves, and this was regarded as a promise to the sick that they should cast off their disease as a serpent casts its skin. The swift power of the reptile over life and death, was an emblem to the votaries of the power of the god to postpone the death of man or to shorten his days.

The inside of the little sanctuary was a cool and still retreat. Tablets hung on the white marble walls, inscribed with the thanksgivings or vows of those who had been healed. On several, the remedies were recorded which had availed in certain cases; and on the left of the little hall, behind a heavy hanging, a small recess contained the archives of the temple, recipes, records of gifts, and documents referring to the history of the sanctuary.

In this deserted, shady spot, between these thick marble walls, it was much cooler than outside. Melissa lifted her hands in prayer before the statue of the god. She was alone, with the exception of the priest in charge. The temple-servant was absent, and the priest was asleep, breathing heavily, in an arm-chair in a dark nook behind the marble group. Thus she was free to follow the impulse of her heart, and pray, first for her sick lover, and then for the sufferer to whom the whole subservient world belonged.

For Diodoros, indeed, as she knew, other hands and hearts were uplifted in loving sympathy. But who besides herself was praying for the hated sovereign who had at his command the costliest and rarest gifts of fortune, all poisoned by bitter anguish of mind and body? The world thought only of the sufferings he had inflicted on others; no one dreamed of the pangs he had to endure—no one but herself, to whom Galenus had spoken of them. And had not his features and his look betrayed to her that pain was gnawing at his vitals like the vulture at those of Prometheus? Hapless, pitiable youth, born to the highest fortune, and now a decrepit old man in the flower of his age! To pray and sacrifice for him must be a pious deed, pleasing to the gods.

Melissa besought the marble images over the

altar from the very bottom of her heart, never even asking herself why she was bestowing on this stranger, this cruel tyrant, in whose name her own brother was in danger of the law, an emotion which nothing but her care for those dearest to her had ever stirred. But she did not feel that he was a stranger, and never thought how far apart they were. Her prayers came easily, too, in this spot; the bonds that linked her to these beautiful marble beings were familiar and dear to her. While she gazed up into the face of Asklepios, imploring him to be gracious to the imperial youth, and release him from the pain but for which he might have been humane and beneficent, the stony features seemed to live before her eyes, and the majesty and dignity that beamed on the brow assured her that the god's power and wisdom were great enough to heal every disease. The tender smile which played on his features filled her soul with the certainty that he would vouchsafe to be gracious; nay, she could believe that he moved those marble lips and promised to grant her prayer. And when she turned to the statue of Hygeia she fancied the beautiful, kind face nodded to her with a pledge of fulfillment.

She raised her beseeching arms higher still, and addressed her sculptured friends aloud, as though they could hear her:

"I know that nothing is hidden from you, eternal gods," she began, "and when it was your will that my mother should be taken from me my foolish heart rebelled. But I was then a child without understanding, and my soul lay as it were asleep. Now it is different. You know that I have learned to love a man; and many things, and the certainty that the gods are good, have come to me with that love. Forgive the maid the sins of

the child, and make my lover whole, as he lies under the protection and in the sanctuary of the great Serapis, still needing your aid too. He is mending, and the greatest of thy ministers, O Asklepios, says he will recover, so it must be true. Yet without thee even the skill of Galenus is of little avail; wherefore I beseech you both, Heal Diodoros, whom I love!—But I would fain entreat you for another. You will wonder, perhaps—for it is Bassianus Antoninus, whom they call Caracalla and Cæsar.

“Thou, Asklepios, dost look in amazement, and great Hygeia shakes her head. And it is hard to say what moves me, who love another, to pray for the blood-stained murderer for whom not another soul in his empire would say a word to you. Nay, and I know not what it is. Perhaps it is but pity; for he, who ought to be the happiest, is surely the most wretched man under the sun. O great Asklepios, O bountiful and gracious Hygeia, ease his sufferings, which are indeed beyond endurance! Nor shall you lack an offering. I will dedicate a cock to you; and as the cock announces a new day, so perchance shall you grant to Caracalla the dawn of a new existence in better health.

“Alas, gracious god! but thou art grave, as though the offering were too small. How gladly would I bring a goat, but I know not whether my money will suffice, for it is only what I have saved. By and by, when the youth I love is my husband, I will prove my gratitude; for he is as rich as he is handsome and kind, and will, I know, refuse me nothing. And thou, sweet goddess, dost not look down upon me as graciously as before; I fear thou art angry. Yet think not”—and she gave a low laugh—“that I pray for Caracalla because I care

for him, or am in love with him. No, no, no, no! my heart is wholly given to Diodoros, and not the smallest part of it to any other. It is Cæsar's misery alone that brings me hither. Sooner would I kiss one of those serpents or a thorny hedgehog than him, the fratricide in the purple. Believe me, it is true, strange as it must seem.

"First and last, I pray and offer sacrifice indeed for Diodoros and his recovery. My brother Alexander, too, who is in danger, I would fain commend to you; but he is well in body, and your remedies are of no effect against the perils which threaten him."

Here she ceased, and gazed into the faces of the statues, but they would not look so friendly as before. It was, no doubt, the smallness of her offering that had offended them. She anxiously drew out her little money-bag and counted the contents. But when, after waking the priest, she had asked how much a goat might cost for sacrifice, her countenance cleared, for her savings were enough to pay for it and for a young cock as well. All she had she left with the old man, to the last sesterce; but she could only wait to see the cock sacrificed, for she felt she must go home.


As soon as the blood of the bird had besprinkled the altar, and she had told the divinities that a goat was also to be killed, she fancied that they looked at her more kindly; and she was turning to the door, as light and gay as if she had happily done some difficult task, when the curtain screening off the library of archives was lifted, and a man came out calling her by name. She turned round; but as soon as she saw that he was a Roman, and, as his white toga told her, of the upper class, she took fright. She hastily exclaimed that she was in a

hurry, and flew down the steps, through the garden, and into the road. Once there, she reproached herself for foolish shyness of a stranger who was scarcely younger than her own father ; but by the time she had gone a few steps she had forgotten the incident, and was rehearsing in her mind all she had to tell Heron. She soon saw the tops of the palms and sycamores in their own garden, her faithful old dog Melas barked with delight, and the happiness which the meeting with the stranger had for a moment interrupted revived with unchecked glow.

She was weary, and where could she rest so well as at home? She had escaped many perils, and where could she feel so safe as under her father's roof? Glad as she was at the prospect of her new and handsome home on the other side of the lake, and of all the delights promised her by Diodoros's affection, her heart still clung fondly to the pretty, neat little dwelling whose low roof now gleamed in front of her. In the garden, whose shell-strewn paths she now trod, she had played as a child ; that window belonged to the room where her mother had died. And then, coming home was in itself a joy, when she had so much to tell that was pleasant.

The dog leaped along by her side with vehement affection, jumping round her and on her, and she heard the starling's cry, first "Olympias!" and then "My strength!"

A happy smile parted her rosy lips as she glanced at the work-room ; but the two white teeth which always gleamed when she was gay were presently hidden, for her father, it would seem, was out. He was certainly not at work, for the wide window was unscreened, and it was now nearly noon. He was almost always within at this hour, and it would spoil half her gladness not to find him there.



But what was this? What could this mean?

The dog had announced her approach, and old Dido's gray head peeped out of the house-door, to vanish again at once. How strangely she had looked at her—exactly as she had looked that day when the physician had told the faithful creature that her mistress's last hour was at hand!

Melissa's contentment was gone. Before she even crossed the threshold, where the friendly word "Re-joice" greeted her in brown mosaic, she called the old woman by name. No answer.

She went into the kitchen to find Dido; for she, according to her invariable habit of postponing evil as long as possible, had fled to the hearth. There she stood, though the fire was out, weeping bitterly, and covering her wrinkled face with her hands, as though she quailed before the eyes of the girl she must so deeply grieve. One glance at the woman, and the tears which trickled through her fingers and down her lean arms told Melissa that something dreadful had happened. Very pale, and clasping her hand to her heaving bosom, she desired to be told all; but for some time Dido was quite unable to speak intelligibly. And before she could make up her mind to it, she looked anxiously for Argutis, whom she held to be the wisest of mankind, and who, she knew, would reveal the dreadful thing that must be told more judiciously than she could. But the Gaul was not to be seen; so Dido, interrupted by sobs, began the melancholy tale.

Heron had come home between midnight and sunrise and had gone to bed. Next morning, while he was feeding the birds, Zminis, the captain of the night-watch, had come in with some men-at-arms, and had tried to take the artist prisoner in Cæsar's name. On this, Heron had raved like a

bull, had appealed to his Macedonian birth, his rights as a Roman citizen, and much besides, and demanded to know of what he was accused. He was then informed that he was to be held in captivity by the special orders of the head of the police, till his son Alexander, who was guilty of high-treason, should surrender to the authorities. But her master, said Dido, sobbing, had knocked down the man who had tried to bind him with a mighty blow of his fist. At last there was a fearful uproar, and in fact a bloody fight. The starling shouted his cry through it all, the birds fluttered and piped with terror, and it was like the abode of the damned in the nether world; and strangers came crowding about the house, till Skopas arrived and advised Heron to go with the Egyptian.

"But even at the door," Dido added, "he called out to me that you, Melissa, could remain with Polybius till he should recover his liberty. Philip was to appeal for help to the prefect Titianus, and offer him the gems—you know them, he said. And, last of all," and again she began to cry, "he especially commended to my care the tomb—and the birds; and the starling wants some fresh meal-worms." Melissa heard with dismay; the color had faded from her cheeks, and as Dido ended she asked gloomily:

"And Philip—and Alexander?"

"We have thought of everything," replied the old woman. "As soon as we were alone we held a council, Argutis and I. He went to find Alexander, and I went to Philip. I found him in his rooms. He had come home very late, the porter said, and I saw him in bed, and I had trouble enough to wake him. Then I told him all, and he went on in such mad talk—it will be no wonder if the gods punish



him. He wanted to rush off to the prefect, with his hair uncombed, just as he was. I had to bring him to his senses; and then, while I was oiling his hair and helping him into his best new mantle, he changed his mind, for he declared he would come home first, to talk with you and Argutis. Argutis was at home again, but he had not found Alexander, for the poor youth has to hide himself as if he were a murderer." And again she sobbed; nor was it till Melissa had soothed her with kind speeches that she could go on with her story.

Philip had learned yesterday where Alexander was concealed, so he undertook to go across the lake and inform him of what had occurred. But Argutis, faithful and prudent, had hindered him, representing that Alexander, who was easily moved, as soon as he heard that his father was a prisoner would unhesitatingly give himself up to his enemies as a hostage, and rush headlong into danger. Alexander must remain in hiding so long as Cæsar was in Alexandria. He (Argutis) would go instead of Philip, who, for his part, might call on the prefect later. He would cross the lake and warn Melissa not to return home, and to tell Alexander what he might think necessary. The watch might possibly follow Argutis; but he knew every lane and alley, and could mislead and avoid them. Philip had listened to reason. The slave went, and must now soon be back again.

Of how different a home-coming had Melissa dreamed! What new and terrible griefs were these!

Still, though distressed at the thought of her vehement father in prison, she shed no tears, but told herself that matters could only be mended by rational action on behalf of the victims, and not by lamentations. She must be alone, to collect her

strength and consider the situation. So she desired Dido, to her great amazement, to prepare some food, and bring her wine and water. Then, seating herself, with a melancholy glance at her embroidery where it lay folded together, she rested her elbow on the table and her head in her hand, considering to whom she could appeal to save her father.

First she thought of Cæsar himself, whose eye had met hers, and for whom she had prayed and offered sacrifice. But the blood fired her cheeks at the thought, and she repelled it at once. Yet her mind would linger at the Serapeum, where her lover, too, still rested his fevered head. She knew that the high-priests' spacious lodgings there, with their splendid rooms and banqueting halls, had been prepared for the emperor; and she remembered various things which her brother had told her of Timotheus, who was at the head not only of the heathen priesthood, but also of the museum. He was said to be a philosopher, and Philip had more than once been distinguished by him, and invited to his house. Her brother must apply to him. He, who was in a way Caracalla's host, would easily succeed in obtaining her father's release, from his imperial guest.

Her grave face brightened at this thought, and, while she ate and drank, another idea struck her.

Alexander, too, must be known to the high-priest; for Timotheus was the brother of Seleukus, whose daughter the artist had just painted, and Timotheus had seen the portrait and praised it highly. Thus it was not improbable that the generous man would, if Philip besought him, intercede for Alexander. So all might turn out better than she had ventured to hope.

Firmly convinced that it was her part to rescue her family, she once more reviewed in her mind

every acquaintance to whom she might look for aid; but even during her meditations her tired frame asserted its rights, and when Dido came in to remove the remains of the meal and the empty wine-cup, she found Melissa sunk in sleep.

Shaking her head, and saying to herself that it served the old man right for his cruel treatment of a dutiful child—though, for Alexander's sake, she might have tried to keep awake—the faithful soul pushed a cushion under the girl's head, drew the screen across the window, and stood waving off the flies which buzzed about her darling's flushed face, till presently the dog barked, and an energetic knock shook the house-door. Melissa started from her slumbers, the old woman threw aside the fan, and, as she hurried to admit the vehement visitor, cried out to Melissa:

“Be easy, dear child—be easy. It is nothing; depend upon that. I know the knock; it is only Philip.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

DIDO was right. Heron's eldest son had returned from his errand. Tired, disappointed, and with fierce indignation in his eyes, he staggered in like a drunken man who has been insulted in his cups; and, without greeting her—as his mother had taught her children to greet even their slaves—he merely asked in hoarse tones, "Is Melissa come in?"

"Yes, yes," replied Dido, laying her finger to her lips. "You roused her from a nap. And what a state you are in! You must not let her see you so! It is very clear what news you bring. The prefect will not help us?"

"Help us!" echoed Philip, wrathfully. "In Alexandria a man may drown rather than another will risk wetting his feet."

"Nay, it is not so bad as that," said the old woman. "Alexander himself has burned his fingers for others many a time. Wait a minute. I will fetch you a draught of wine. There is some still in the kitchen; for if you appear before your sister in that plight—"

But Melissa had recognized her brother's voice, and, although Philip had smoothed his hair a little with his hands, one glance at his face showed her that his efforts had been vain.

"Poor boy!" she said, when, in answer to her

question as to what his news was, he had answered gloomily, "As bad as possible."

She took his hand and led him into the work-room. There she reminded him that she was giving him a new brother in Diodoros; and he embraced her fondly, and wished her and her betrothed every happiness. She thanked him out of a full heart, while he swallowed his wine, and then she begged him to tell her all he had done.

He began, and, as she gazed at him, it struck her how little he resembled his father and brother, though he was no less tall, and his head was shaped like theirs. But his frame, instead of showing their stalwart build, was lean and weakly. His spine did not seem strong enough for his long body, and he never held himself upright. His head was always bent forward, as if he were watching or seeking something; and even when he had seated himself in his father's place at the work-table to tell his tale, his hands and feet, even the muscles of his well-formed but colorless face, were in constant movement. He would jump up, or throw back his head to shake his long hair off his face, and his fine, large, dark eyes glowed with wrathful fires.

"I received my first repulse from the prefect," he began, and as he spoke, his arms, on whose graceful use the Greeks so strongly insisted, flew up in the air as though by their own impulse rather than by the speaker's will.

"Titianus affects the philosopher, because when he was young—long ago, that is very certain—his feet trod the Stoa."

"Your master, Xanthos, said that he was a very sound philosopher," Melissa put in.

"Such praise is to be had cheap," said Philip, "by the most influential man in the town. But his

methods are old-fashioned. He crawls after Zeno ; he submits to authority, and requires more independent spirits to do the same. To him the divinity is the Great First Cause. In this world of ours he can discern the working of a purposeful will, and confuses his mind with windy, worn-out ideals. Virtue, he says—but to what end repeat such stale old stuff ? ”

“ We have no time for it,” said Melissa, who saw that Philip was on the point of losing himself in a philosophical dissertation, for he had begun to enjoy the sound of his own voice, which was, in fact, unusually musical.

“ Why not ? ” he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders, and with a bitter smile. “ When he has shot away all his arrows, the bowman may rest ; and, as you will soon hear, our quiver is empty—as empty as this cup which I have drained.”

“ No, no ! ” exclaimed Melissa, eagerly. “ If this first attempt has failed, that is the very reason for planning another. I, too, can use figures of speech. The archer who is really eager to hit the object on which he has spent his arrows, does not retire from the fight, but fetches more ; and if he can find none, he fights with his bow, or falls on the enemy with stones, fists, and teeth.”

Philip looked at her in astonishment, and exclaimed in pleased surprise, without any of the supercilious scorn which he commonly infused into his tone when addressing his humble sister :

“ Listen to our little girl ! Where did those gentle eyes get that determined flash ? From misfortune—from misfortune ! They rob the gentle dove of her young—I mean her splendid Alexander—and lo, she becomes a valiant falcon ! I expected to find you a heart-broken lamb, over your tear-stained

stitching, and behold it is you who try to fire me. Well, then, tell me what arrows we have left, when you have heard me out. But, before I proceed, is Argutis at home again? No? He must go across again, to take various things to Alexander—linen, garments, and the like. I met Glaukias the sculptor, and he begged me not to forget it; for he knows where the lad is hidden, and was on the point of going over to see him. The man had made himself perfectly unrecognizable. He is a true friend, if such a thing there be! And how grieved he was to hear of my father's ill fortune! I believe he is envious of Diodoros." Melissa shook a finger at him; but she turned pale, and curiously inquired whether her brother had remembered to warn Glaukias on no account to tell Alexander that it was in his power to release his father.

Philip struck his brow, and, with a helpless fall of the mouth, which was usually so firmly set and ready to sneer, he exclaimed, like a boy caught in mischief: "That, that—I can not imagine how I forgot it, but I did not mention it. What strange absence of mind! But I can remedy it at once on the spot. Argutis—nay, I will go myself."

He sprang up, and was on the point of carrying out his sudden purpose, but Melissa detained him. With a decisiveness which again amazed him, she desired him to remain; and while he paced the work-room with rapid strides, heaping abuse on himself, now striking his breast, and now pushing his fingers through his disordered hair, she made it clear to him that he could not reach Alexander in time to prevent his knowing all, and that the only result of his visit would be to put the watch on the track. Instead of raving and lamenting, he would do better to tell her whither he had been.

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First, he hastily began, he had gone to the prefect Titianus, who was an elderly man of a noble family, many of whose members had ere now occupied the official residence of the prefect in Alexandria, and in other towns of Egypt. He had often met Philip at the disputations he was wont to attend in the Museum, and had a great regard for him. But of late Titianus had been out of health, and had kept his house. He had undergone some serious operation shortly before Cæsar's arrival at Alexandria had been announced, and this had made it impossible for him to be present at the grand reception, or even to pay his respects to Caracalla.

When Philip had sent in his name, Titianus had been very ready to receive him; but while the philosopher was still waiting in the anteroom, wondering to find it so empty—for it was usually crowded with the clients, petitioners, and friends of the most important man in the province—a bustle had arisen behind him, and a tall man had been ushered in past him, whom he recognized as the senator on whose arm Caracalla had leaned in the morning. This was the actor, whom the priest of Serapis had pointed out to Melissa as one of Cæsar's most powerful favorites. From being a mere dancer he had risen in the course of a few years to the highest dignities. His name was Theocritus, and although he was distinguished by great personal beauty and exceptional cleverness, his unbridled greed had made him hated, and he had proved equally incompetent as a statesman and a general.

As this man marched through the anteroom, he had glanced haughtily about him, and the look of contempt which fell on the philosopher probably reflected on the small number of persons present, for at that hour the anterooms of Romans of rank



were commonly thronged. Most visitors had been dismissed, by reason of the prefect's illness, and many of the acquaintances and supplicants who were generally to be found here were assembled in the imperial quarters, or in the rooms of the prætorian prefect and other powerful dignitaries in Caracalla's train. Titianus had failed to be present at the emperor's arrival, and keen courtier noses smelled a fall, and judged it wise to keep out of the way of a tottering power.

Besides all this, the prefect's honesty was well known, and it was strongly suspected that he, as steward of all the taxes of this wealthy province, had been bold enough to reject a proposal made by Theocritus to embezzle the whole freight of a fleet loaded with corn for Rome, and charge it to the account of army munitions. It was a fact that this base proposal had been made and rejected only the evening before, and the scene of which Philip became the witness was the result of this refusal.

Theocritus, to whom an audience was always indispensable, carefully left the curtains apart which divided the prefect's sick-room from the antechamber, and thus Philip was witness of the proceedings he now described to his sister.

Titianus received his visitor, lying down, and yet his demeanor revealed the self-possessed dignity of a high-born Roman, and the calm of a Stoic philosopher. He listened unmoved to the courtier, who, after the usual formal greetings, took upon himself to overwhelm the older man with the bitterest accusations and reproaches. People allowed themselves to take strange liberties with Cæsar in this town, Theocritus burst out; insolent jests passed from lip to lip. An epigram against his sacred person had found its way into the Serapeum, his present resi-

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dence—an insult worthy of any punishment, even of death and crucifixion.

When the prefect, with evident annoyance, but still quite calmly, desired to know what this extraordinary insult might be, Theocritus showed that even in his high position he had preserved the accurate memory of the mime, and, half angry, but yet anxious to give full effect to the lines by voice and gesture, he explained that “some wretch had fastened a rope to one of the doors of the sanctuary, and had written below it the blasphemous words—

‘Hail! For so welcome a guest never came to the sovereign of Hades.

Who ever peopled his realm, Cæsar, more freely than thou?  
Laurels refuse to grow green in the darksome abode of Serapis;  
Take, then, this rope for a gift, never more richly deserved.’”

“It is disgraceful!” exclaimed the prefect. “Your indignation is well founded. But the biting tongue of the frivolous mixed races dwelling in this city is well known. They have tried it on me; and if, in this instance, any one is to blame, it is not I, the imprisoned prefect, but the chief and captain of the night-watch, whose business it is to guard Cæsar’s residence more strictly.”

At this Theocritus was furious, and poured out a flood of words, expatiating on the duties of a prefect as Cæsar’s representative in the provinces. “His eye must be as omniscient as that of the all-seeing Deity. The better he knew the uproarious rabble over whom he ruled, the more evidently was it his duty to watch over Cæsar’s person as anxiously as a mother over her child, as a miser over his treasure.”

The high-sounding words flowed with dramatic emphasis, the sentimental speaker adding to their

impressiveness by the action of his hands, till it was more than the invalid could bear. With a pinched smile, he raised himself with difficulty, and interrupted Theocritus with the impatient exclamation, "Still the actor!"

"Yes, still!" retorted the favorite, in a hard voice. "You, however, have been even longer—what you have, indeed, been too long—Prefect of Egypt!"

With an angry fling he threw the corner of his toga over his shoulder, and, though his hand shook with rage, the pliant drapery fell in graceful folds over his athletic limbs. He turned his back on the prefect, and, with the air of a general who has just been crowned with laurels, he stalked through the anteroom and past Philip once more.

The philosopher had told his sister all this in a few sentences. He now paused in his walk to and fro to answer Melissa's question as to whether this upstart's influence were really great enough to turn so noble and worthy a man out of his office.

"Can you ask?" said Philip. "Titianus had no doubts from the first; and what I heard in the Serapeum—but all in good time. The prefect was sorry for my father and Alexander, but ended by saying that he himself needed an intercessor; for, if it were not to-day, at any rate to-morrow, the actor would inveigle Cæsar into signing his death-warrant."

"Impossible!" cried the girl, spreading out her hands in horror; but Philip dropped into a seat, saying:

"Listen to the end. There was evidently nothing to be hoped for from Titianus. He is, no doubt, a brave man, but there is a touch of the actor in him too. He is a Stoic; and where would be the point of that, if a man could not appear to look on *approaching* death as calmly as on taking a bath?

Titianus plays his part well. However, I next went to the Serapeum—it is a long way, and it was very hot in the sun—to ask for help from my old patron, the high-priest. Cæsar is now his guest; and the prefect, too, had advised me to place my father's cause in his hands."

Here Philip sprang up again, and rushed up and down, sometimes stopping for a moment in front of his sister while he went on with his story.

Theocritus had long since reached the Serapeum in his swift chariot when the philosopher at last arrived there on foot. He was well known as a frequent visitor, and was shown at once into the hall of that part of his abode which Timotheus had reserved for himself when he had given up all the best rooms to his imperial visitor.

The anteroom was crowded, and before he got any farther he heard that the favorite's accusations had already led to serious results, and rumors were rife concerning the luckless witticisms of some heedless youth, which would bring grief upon the peaceable citizens. But before he could ask what was meant, he was admitted to the high-priest's room.

This was a marked favor on such a day as this, and the benevolence with which he was received by the head of the priesthood of the whole city filled him with good hopes of a successful issue. But hardly had Philip begun to speak of his brother's misdemeanor, than Timotheus laid his hand on his bearded lips, as a hint to be cautious, and whispered in his ear, "Speak quickly and low, if you love your life!"

When Philip had hastily explained that Zminis had imprisoned his father, the old man started to his feet with a promptitude to which his majestic

person was unaccustomed, and pointed to a curtained doorway on one side of the room.

"Through that door," he whispered, "you will reach the western steps, and the passage leading out of the precincts to the stadium. You are known to the Romans in the anteroom. It is not the god to whom this building is dedicated who now rules within these walls. Your brother's rash words are repeated everywhere, and have even come to Cæsar's knowledge; and he has been told that it was the same traitor—who has for the moment escaped Zminis and his men—who nailed a rope on one of our doors, and with it an audacious inscription. To speak a single word in behalf of Alexander or your father would be to fling myself into the fire without putting it out. You do not know how fiercely it is burning. Theocritus is feeding the flame, for he needs it to destroy the prefect. Now, not another word; and, come what may, so long as the Roman visitors dwell under this roof, beware of it!"

And the high-priest opened the door with his own hand.

"I hurried home," Philip added, "and if I forgot, in my dismay at this fresh disaster, to warn Glaukias to be careful— But, no, no! It is unpardonable!—Alexander is by this time crossing the lake, perhaps. I am like Caracalla—my brother's murderer!"

But Melissa laid her arm on his shoulder and besought the poor fellow to be comforted; and her loving words of excuse seemed to have some good effect. But why was he always so reserved? Why could not Philip be as frank with her as Alexander was? She had never been very near to him; and now he was concealing from her something which *moved* him deeply.

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She turned away sadly, for she could not even comfort him. But then again Philip sighed from the bottom of his heart, and she could contain herself no longer. More tenderly than she had ever addressed him before, she besought her brother to open his heart to her. She would gladly help him to endure what oppressed him; and she could understand, for she herself had learned what the joys and sorrows of love were.

She had found the right clew. Philip nodded, and answered gloomily :

"Well, then, listen. It may do me good to speak."

And thereupon he began to tell her what she had already heard from Alexander; and, covering her tingling cheeks with her hands, she listened with breathless attention, not missing a word, though the question rose to her mind again and again whether she should tell him the whole truth, which he as yet could not know, or whether it would be better to spare his already burdened soul.

He described his love in glowing colors. Korinna's heart, he said, must have gone forth to him; for, at their last meeting on the northern shore of the lake, her hand had rested in his while he helped her out of the boat; he could still feel the touch of her fingers. Nor had the meeting been pure accident, for he had since seen and recognized the presence on earth of her departed soul in her apparently living form. And she, too, with the subtle senses of a disembodied spirit, must have had a yearning towards him, for she had perceived all the depth and fervor of his passion. Alexander had given him this certainty; for when he had seen Korinna by the lake, her soul had long since abandoned its earthly tenement. Before that, her mortal part was already beyond his reach; and yet he was happy,

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for the spirit was not lost to him. Only last night magic forces had brought her before him—his father, too, had been present, and no deception was possible. He had gone to bed in rapturous excitement, full of delicious hopes, and Korinna had at once appeared to him in a dream, so lovely, so kind, and at the same time so subtle a vision, ready to follow him in his thoughts and strivings. But just as he had heard a full assurance of her love from her own lips, and was asking her by what name he should call her when the craving to see her again should wax strong in him, old Dido had waked him, to cast him out of elysium into the deepest earthly woes.

But, he added—and he drew himself up proudly—he should soon possess the Magian's art, for there was no kind of learning he could not master; even as a boy he had proved that to his teachers. He, whose knowledge had but yesterday culminated in the assurance that it was impossible to know anything, could now assert with positive conviction, that the human soul could exist apart from the matter it had animated. He had thus gained that fixed footing outside the earth which Archimedes had demanded to enable him to move it; and he should soon be able to exert his power over departed souls, whose nature he now understood as well as—ay, and better than—Serapion. Korinna's obedient spirit would help him, and when once he should succeed in commanding the souls of the dead, as their master, and in keeping them at hand among the living, a new era of happiness would begin, not only for him and his father, but for every one who had lost one dear to him by death.

But here Melissa interrupted his eager and confident speech. She had listened with increasing uneasiness to the youth who, as she knew, had been

cheated. At first she thought it would be cruel to destroy his bright illusions. He should at least in this be happy, till the anguish of having thoughtlessly betrayed his brother to ruin should be a thing of the past! But when she perceived that he purposed involving his father in the Magian's snares by calling up his mother's Manes, she could no longer be silent, and she broke out with indignant warning: "Leave my father alone, Philip! For all you saw at the Magian's was mere trickery."

"Gently, child," said the philosopher, in a superior tone. "I was of exactly the same opinion till after sundown yesterday. You know that the tendency of the school of philosophy to which I belong insists, above all, on a suspension of judgment; but if there is one thing which may be asserted with any dogmatic certainty—"

But Melissa would hear no more. She briefly but clearly explained to him who the maiden was whose hand he had held by the lake, and whom he had seen again at Serapion's house; and as she went on his interruptions became fewer. She did her utmost, with growing zeal, to destroy his luckless dream; but when the blood faded altogether from his colorless cheeks, and he clasped his hand over his brow as if to control some physical suffering, she recovered her self-command; the beautiful fear of a woman's heart of ever giving useless pain, made her withhold from Philip what remained to be told of Agatha's meeting with Alexander.

But, without this further revelation, Philip sat staring at the ground as if he were overwhelmed; and what hurt him so deeply was less the painful sense of having been cheated by such coarse cunning, than the annihilation of the treasured hopes which he had founded on the experiences of the past

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night. He felt as though a brutal foot had trampled down the promise of future joys on which he had counted; his sister's revelations had spoiled not merely his life on earth, but all eternity beyond the grave. Where hope ends despair steps in; and Philip, with reckless vehemence, flung himself, as it were, into its arms. His was an excitable nature; he had never thought of any one but himself, but labored with egotistical zeal to cultivate his own mind and outdo his fellows in the competition for learning. The sullen words in which he called himself the most wretched man on earth, and the victim of the blackest ill-fortune, fell from his lips like stones. He rudely repelled his sister's encouraging words, like a sick child whose pain is the greater for being pitied, till at last she appealed to his sense of duty, reminding him that something must be done to rescue her father and Alexander.

"They also! They also!" he cried. "It falls on us all. Blind Fate drives us all, innocent as we are, to death and despair, like the Tantalides. What sin have you committed, gentle, patient child; or our father, or our happy-hearted and gifted brother; or I—I myself? Have those whom we call the rulers of the universe the right to punish me because I make use of the inquiring spirit they have bestowed on me? Ah, and how well they know how to torture us! They hate me for my learning, and so they turn my little errors to account to allow me to be cheated like a fool! They are said to be just, and they behave like a father who disinherits his son because, as a man, he notes his parent's weakness. With tears and anguish have I striven for truth and knowledge. There is not a province of thought whose deepest depths I have not tried to fathom; and when I recognized that it is not

given to mortals to apprehend the essence of the divinity because the organs bestowed on us are too small and feeble; when I refused to pronounce whether that which I can not apprehend exists or not, was that my fault, or theirs? There may be divine forces which created and govern the universe; but never talk to me of their goodness, and reasonableness, and care for human creatures! Can a reasonable being, who cares for the happiness of another, strew the place assigned to him to dwell in with snares and traps, or implant in his breast a hundred impulses of which the gratification only drags him into an abyss? Is that Being my friend, who suffers me to be born and to grow up, and leaves me tied to the martyr's stake, with very few real joys, and finally kills me, innocent or guilty, as surely as I am born? If the divinity which is supposed to bestow on us a portion of the divine essence in the form of reason were constituted as the crowd are taught to believe, there could be nothing on earth but wisdom and goodness; but the majority are fools or wicked, and the good are like tall trees, which the lightning blasts rather than the creeping weed. Titianus falls before the dancer Theocritus, the noble Papinian before the murderer Caracalla, our splendid Alexander before such a wretch as Zminis; and divine reason lets it all happen, and allows human reason to proclaim the law. Happiness is for fools and knaves; for those who cherish and uphold reason—ay, reason, which is a part of the divinity—persecution, misery, and despair."

"Have done!" Melissa exclaimed. "Have the judgments of the immortals not fallen hardly enough on us? Would you provoke them to discharge their fury in some more dreadful manner?"

At this the skeptic struck his breast with defiant pride, exclaiming: "I do not fear them, and dare to proclaim openly the conclusions of my thoughts. There are no gods! There is no rational guidance of the universe. It has arisen self-evolved, by chance; and if a god created it, he laid down eternal laws and has left them to govern its course without mercy or grace, and without troubling himself about the pining of men who creep about on the face of the earth like the ants on that of a pumpkin. And well for us that it should be so! Better a thousand times is it to be the servant of an iron law, than the slave of a capricious master who takes a malignant and envious pleasure in destroying the best!"

"And this, you say, is the final outcome of your thoughts?" asked Melissa, shaking her head sadly. "Do you not perceive that such an outbreak of mad despair is simply unworthy of your own wisdom, of which the end and aim should be a passionless, calm, and immovable moderation?"

"And do they show such moderation," Philip gasped out, "who pour the poison of misfortune in floods on one tortured heart?"

"Then you can accuse those whose existence you disbelieve in?" retorted Melissa with angry zeal. "Is this your much-belauded logic? What becomes of your dogmas, in the face of the first misfortune—dogmas which enjoin a reserve of decisive judgment, that you may preserve your equanimity, and not overburden your soul, in addition to the misfortune itself, with the conviction that something monstrous has befallen you? I remember how much that pleased me the first time I heard it. For your own sake—for the sake of us all—cease this foolish raving, and do not merely call yourself a skeptic—

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be one; control the passion that is rending you. For love of me—for love of us all—”

And as she spoke she laid her hand on his shoulder, for he had sat down again; and although he pushed her away with some petulance, she went on in a tone of gentle entreaty: “If we are not to be altogether too late in the field, let us consider the situation calmly. I am but a girl, and this fresh disaster will fall more hardly on me than on you; for what would become of me without my father?”

“Life with him has at any rate taught you patient endurance,” her brother broke in with a sullen shrug.

“Yes, life,” she replied, firmly—“life, which shows us the right way better than all your books.—Who can tell what may have detained Argutis? I will wait no longer. The sun will have set before long, and this evening Cæsar is to sup with Seleukus, the father of Korinna. I happen to know it from Samonicus, who is one of the guests. Seleukus and his wife have a great regard for Alexander, and will do for him all that lies in their power. The lady Berenike, he told me, is a noble dame. It should be your part to entreat her help for our father and brother; but you must not venture where Cæsar is. So I will go, and I shall have no rest till Korinna’s mother listens to me and promises to aid us.”

At this Philip exclaimed, in horror:

“What! you will dare to enter the house where Caracalla is feasting with the rabble he calls his friends? You, an inexperienced girl, young, beautiful, whose mere appearance is enough to stir their evil passions? Sooner than allow that, I will myself find my way into the house of Seleukus, and among the spies who surround the tyrant.”

"That my father may lose another son, and I my only remaining brother?" Melissa observed, with grave composure. "Say no more, Philip. I am going, and you must wait for me here."

The philosopher broke out at this in despotic wrath:

"What has come over you, that you have suddenly forgotten how to obey? But I insist; and rather than allow you to bring on us not trouble merely, but shame and disgrace, I will lock you into your room!"

He seized her hand to drag her into the adjoining room. She struggled with all her might; but he was the stronger, and he had got her as far as the door, when the Gaul Argutis rushed, panting and breathless, into the work-room through the ante-room, calling out to the struggling couple:

"What are you doing? By all the gods, you have chosen the wrong time for a quarrel! Zminis is on the way hither to take you both prisoners; he will be here in a minute! Fly into the kitchen, girl! Dido will hide you in the wood-store behind the hearth.—You, Philip, must squeeze into the hen-house. Only be quick, or it will be too late!"

"Go!" cried Melissa to her brother. "Out through the kitchen window you can get into the poultry-yard!"

She threw herself weeping into his arms, kissed him, and added, hastily: "Whatever happens to us, I shall risk all to save my father and Alexander. Farewell! The gods preserve us!"

She now seized Philip's wrist, as he had before grasped hers, to drag him away; but he freed himself, saying, with an indifference which terrified her: "Then let the worst come. Ruin may take its course. Death rather than dishonor!"

"Madman!" the slave could not help exclaiming; and the faithful fellow, though wont to obey, threw his arms round his master's son to drag him away into the kitchen, while Philip pushed him off, saying :

"I will not hide, like a frightened woman!"

But the Gaul heard the approach of marching men, so, paying no further heed to the brother, he dragged Melissa into the kitchen, where old Dido undertook to hide her.

Philip stood panting in the studio. Through the open window he could see the pursuers coming nearer, and the instinct of self-preservation, which asserts itself even in the strongest, prompted him to follow the slave's advice. But before he could reach the door, in fancy he saw himself joining the party of philosophers airing themselves under the arcades in the great court of the Museum; he heard their laughter and their bitter jests at the skeptic, the independent thinker, who had sought refuge among the fowls, who had been hauled out of the hen-house; and this picture confirmed his determination to yield to force rather than bring on himself the curse of ridicule. But at the same time other reasons for submitting to his fate suggested themselves unbidden—reasons more worthy of his position, of the whole course and aim of his thoughts, and of the sorrow which weighed upon his soul. It beseemed him as a skeptic to endure the worst with equanimity; under all circumstances he liked to be in the right, and he would fain have called out to his sister that the cruel powers whose enmity he had incurred still persisted in driving him on to despair and death, worthy as he was of a better fate.

A few minutes later Zminis came in, and put out

his long lean arms to apprehend him in Cæsar's name. Philip submitted, and not a muscle of his face moved. Once, indeed, a smile lighted it up, as he reflected that they would hardly have carried him off to prison if Alexander were already in their power; but the smile gave way only too soon to gloomy gravity when Zminis informed him that his brother, the traitor, had just given himself up to the chief of the night-watch, and was now safe under lock and ward. But his crime was so great that, according to the law of Egypt, his nearest relations were to be seized and punished with him. Only his sister was now missing, but they would know how to find her.

"Possibly," Philip replied, coldly. "As Justice is blind, Injustice has no doubt all the sharper eyes."

"Well said," laughed the Egyptian. "A pinch of the salt which they give you at the Museum with your porridge—for nothing."

Argutis had witnessed this scene; and when, half an hour later, the men-at-arms had left the house without discovering Melissa's hiding-place, he informed her that Alexander had, as they feared, given himself up of his own free-will to procure Heron's release; but the villains had kept the son, without liberating the father. Both were now in prison, loaded with chains. The slave had ended his tale some minutes, and Melissa still stood, pale and tearless, gazing on the ground as though she were turned to stone; but suddenly she shivered, as if with the chill of fever, and looked up, out through the windows into the garden, now dim in the twilight. The sun had set, night was falling, and again the words of the Christian preacher recurred to her mind: "The fullness of the time is come."

To her and hers a portion of life had come to an end, and a new one must grow out of it. Should the free-born race of Heron perish in captivity and death?

The evening star blazed out on the distant horizon, seeming to her as a sign from the gods; and she told herself that it must be her part, as the last of the family who remained free, to guard the others from destruction in this new life.

The heavens were soon blazing with stars. The banquet in Seleukus's house, at which Cæsar was to appear, would begin in an hour. Irresolution and delay would ruin all; so she drew herself up resolutely and called to Argutis, who had watched her with faithful sympathy:

"Take my father's blue cloak, Argutis, to make you more dignified; and disguise yourself, for you must escort me, and we may be followed.—You, Dido, come and help me. Take my new dress, that I wore at the Feast of Adonis, out of my trunk; and with it you will see my mother's blue fillet with the gems. My father used to say I should first wear it at my wedding, but— Well, you must bind my hair with it to-night. I am going to a grand house, where no one will be admitted who does not look worthy of people of mark. But take off the jewel; a suppliant should make no display."



## CHAPTER XV.

NOTHING delighted old Dido more than to dress the daughter of her beloved mistress in all her best, for she had helped to bring her up; but to-day it was a cruel task; tears dimmed her old eyes. It was not till she had put the finishing touches to braiding the girl's abundant brown hair, pinned her peplos on the shoulders with brooches, and set the girdle straight, that her face cleared, as she looked at the result. Never had she seen her darling look so fair. Nothing, indeed, remained of the child-like timidity and patient submissiveness which had touched Dido only two days since, as she plaited Melissa's hair. The maiden's brow was grave and thoughtful, the lips firmly set; but she seemed to Dido to have grown, and to have gained something of her mother's mature dignity. She looked, the old woman told her, like the image of Pallas Athene; adding, to make her smile, that if she wanted an owl, she, Dido, could fill the part. Jestings had never been the old woman's strong point, and to-day it was less easy than ever; for, if the worst befell, and she were sent in her old age to a strange house—and Argutis, no doubt, to another—she would have to turn the handmill for the rest of her days.

But it was a hard task which the motherless—and now fatherless—girl had set herself, and she must try to cheer her darling. While she was dress-

ing her, she never ceased praying to all the gods and goddesses she could think of to come to the maiden's aid, and move the souls of those who could help her. And though she was, as a rule, ready to expect the worst, this time she hoped for the best; for Seleukus's wife must have a heart of stone if she could close it to such innocence, such beauty, and the pathetic glance of those large, imploring eyes.

When at length Melissa quitted the house, deeply veiled, with Argutis to escort her, she took his arm; and he, wearing his master's mantle, and exempted long since from keeping his hair cropped, was so proud of this that he walked with all the dignity of a freeman, and no one could have guessed that he was a slave. Melissa's face was completely hidden, and she, like her companion, was safe from recognition. Argutis, nevertheless, led her through the quietest and darkest lanes to the Kanopic way. Both were silent, and looked straight before them. Melissa, as she walked on, could not think with her usual calm. Like a suffering man who goes to the physician's house to die or be cured by the knife, she felt that she was on her way to something terrible in itself, to remedy, if possible, something still more dreadful. Her father—Alexander, so reckless and so good-hearted—Philip, whom she pitied—and her sick lover, came in turn before her fancy. But she could not control her mind to dwell on either for long. Nor could she, as usual, when she had any serious purpose in hand, put up a prayer to her mother's manes or the immortals; and all the while an inner voice made itself heard, confidently promising her that Cæsar, for whom she had sacrificed, and who might be kinder and more merciful than others fancied, would at once grant all she should ask. But she would not

listen ; and when she nevertheless ventured to consider how she could make her way into Cæsar's presence, a cold shiver ran down her back, and again Philip's last words sounded in her ears, "Death rather than dishonor!"

Other thoughts and feelings filled the slave's soul. He, who had always watched over his master's children with far more anxious care than Heron himself, had not said a word to dissuade Melissa from her perilous expedition. Her plan had, indeed, seemed to him the only one which promised any success. He was a man of sixty years, and a shrewd fellow, who might easily have found a better master than Heron had been ; but he gave not a thought to his own prospects—only to Melissa's, whom he loved as a child of his own. She had placed herself under his protection, and he felt responsible for her fate. Thus he regarded it as great good fortune that he could be of use in procuring her admission to the house of Seleukus, for the door-keeper was a fellow-countryman of his, whom Fate had brought hither from the banks of the Moselle. At every festival, which secured a few hours' liberty to all the slaves, they had for years been boon companions, and Argutis knew that his friend would do for him and his young mistress all that lay in his power. It would, of course, be difficult to get an audience of the mistress of a house where Cæsar was a guest, but the door-keeper was clever and ingenious, and would do anything short of the impossible.

So he walked with his head high and his heart full of pride, and it confirmed his courage when one of Zminis's men, whom they passed in the brightly illuminated Kanopic street, and who had helped to secure Philip, looked at him without recognizing him.

There was a great stir in this, the handsomest road through the city. The people were waiting for Cæsar; but stricter order was observed than on the occasion of his arrival. The guard prohibited all traffic on the southern side of the way, and only allowed the citizens to walk up and down the foot-path, shaded by trees, between the two roadways paved with granite flags, and the arcades in front of the houses on either side. The free inhabitants, unaccustomed to such restrictions, revenged themselves by cutting witticisms at Cæsar's expense, "for clearing the streets of Alexandria by his men-at-arms as he did those of Rome by the executioner. He seemed to have forgotten, as he kept the two roads open, that he only needed one, now that he had murdered his brother and partner."

Melissa and her companion were ordered to join the crowd on the footway; but Argutis managed to convince a man on guard that they were two of the mimes who were to perform before Cæsar—the door-keeper at the house of Seleukus would confirm the fact—and the official himself made way for them into the vestibule of this splendid dwelling.

But Melissa was as little in the humor to admire all the lavish magnificence which surrounded her as Alexander had been a few days since. Still veiled, she modestly took a place among the choir who stood on each side of the hall ready to welcome Cæsar with singing and music. Argutis stopped to speak with his friend. She dimly felt that the whispering and giggling all about her was at her expense; and when an elderly man, the choir-master, asked her what she wanted, and desired her to remove her veil, she obeyed at once, saying: "Pray let me stand here; the Lady Berenike will send for me presently."

"Very well," replied the musician; and he silenced the singers, who were hazarding various impertinent guesses as to the arrival of so pretty a girl just when Cæsar was expected.

As Melissa dropped her veil the splendor of the scene, lighted up by numberless tapers and lamps, forced itself on her attention. She now perceived that the porphyry columns of the great hall were wreathed with flowers, and that garlands swung in graceful curves from the open roof; while at the farther end, statues had been placed of Septimus Severus and Julia Domna, Caracalla's parents. On each side of these works of art stood bowers of plants, in which gay-plumaged birds were fluttering about, excited by the lights. But all these glories swam before her eyes, and the first question which the artist's daughter was wont to ask herself, "Is it really beautiful or no?" never occurred to her mind. She did not even notice the smell of incense, until some fresh powder was thrown on, and it became oppressive.

She was fully conscious only of two facts, when at last Argutis returned: that she was the object of much curious examination, and that every one was wondering what detained Cæsar so long.

At last, after she had waited many long minutes, the door-keeper approached her with a young woman in a rich but simple dress, in whom she recognized Johanna, the Christian waiting-maid of whom Alexander had spoken. She did not speak, but beckoned her to come.

Breathing anxiously, and bending her head low, Melissa, following her guide, reached a handsome impluvium, where a fountain played in the midst of a bed of roses. Here the moon and starlight mingled with that of lamps without number, and the

ruddy glare of a blaze ; for all round the basin, from which the playing waters danced skyward, stood marble genii, carrying in their hands or on their heads silver dishes, in which the leaping flames consumed cedar chips and aromatic resins.

At the back of this court, where it was as light as day, at the top of three steps, stood the statues of Alexander the Great and Caracalla. They were of equal size ; and the artist, who had wrought the second in great haste out of the slightest materials, had been enjoined to make Cæsar as like as possible in every respect to the hero he most revered. Thus they looked like brothers. The figures were lighted up by the fires which burned on two altars of ivory and gold. Beautiful boys, dressed as armed Erotes, fed the flames.

The whole effect was magical and bewildering ; but, as she followed her guide, Melissa only felt that she was in the midst of a new world, such as she might perhaps have seen in a dream ; till, as they passed the fountain, the cool drops sprinkled her face.

Then she suddenly remembered what had brought her hither. In a minute she must appear as a suppliant in the presence of Korinna's mother—perhaps even in that of Cæsar himself—and the fate of all dear to her depended on her demeanor. The sense of fulfilling a serious duty was uppermost in her mind. She drew herself up, and replaced a stray lock of hair ; and her heart beat almost to bursting as she saw a number of men standing on the platform at the top of the steps, round a lady who had just risen from her ivory seat. Giving her hand to a Roman senator, distinguished by the purple edge to his toga, she descended the steps, and advanced to meet Melissa.

This dignified matron, who was awaiting the ruler of the world and yet could condescend to come forward to meet a humble artist's daughter, was taller by half a head than her illustrious companion; and the few minutes during which Berenike was coming toward her were enough to fill Melissa with thankfulness, confidence, and admiration. And even in that short time, as she gazed at the magnificent dress of blue brocade shot with gold and sparkling with precious stones which draped the lady's majestic figure, she thought how keen a pang it must cost the mother, so lately bereft of her only child, to maintain a kindly, nay, a genial aspect, in the midst of this display, toward Cæsar and a troop of noisy guests.

The sincerest pity for this woman, rich and pre-eminent as she was, filled the soul of the girl, who herself was so much to be pitied. But when the lady had come up to her, and asked, in her deep voice, what was the danger that threatened her brother, Melissa, with unembarrassed grace, and although it was the first time she had ever addressed a lady of such high degree, answered simply, with a full sense of the business in hand:

"My name is Melissa; I am the sister of Alexander the painter. I know it is overbold to venture into your presence just now, when you have so much else to think of; but I saw no other way of saving my brother's life, which is in peril."

At this Berenike seemed surprised. She turned to her companion, who was her sister's husband, and the first Egyptian who had been admitted to the Roman Senate, and said, in a tone of gentle reproach:

"Did not I say so, Cæranus? Nothing but the

most urgent need would have brought Alexander's sister to speak with me at such an hour."

And the senator, whose black eyes had rested with pleasure on Melissa's rare beauty, promptly replied, "And if she had come for the veriest trifle she would be no less welcome to me."

"Let me hear no more of such speeches," Berenike exclaimed with some annoyance.—"Now, my child, be quick. What about your brother?"

Melissa briefly and truthfully reported Alexander's heedless crime and the results to her father and Philip. She ended by beseeching the noble lady with fervent pathos to intercede for her father and brothers.

Meanwhile the senator's keen face had darkened, and the lady Berenike's large eyes, too, were downcast. She evidently found it hard to come to a decision; and for the moment she was relieved of the necessity, for runners came hurrying up, and the senator hastily desired Melissa to stand aside.

He whispered to his sister-in-law:

"It will never do to spoil Cæsar's good-humor under your roof for the sake of such people," and Berenike had only time to reply, "I am not afraid of him," when the messenger explained to her that Cæsar himself was prevented from coming, but that his representatives, charged with his apologies, were close at hand.

On this Cœranus exclaimed, with a sour smile: "Admit that I am a true prophet! You have to put up with the same treatment that we senators have often suffered under."

But the matron scarcely heard him. She cast her eyes up to heaven with sincere thanksgiving as she murmured with a sigh of relief, "For this mercy the gods be praised!"



She unclasped her hands from her heaving bosom, and said to the steward who had followed the messengers :

"Cæsar will not be present. Inform your lord, but so that no one else may hear. He must come here and receive the imperial representatives with me. Then have my couch quietly removed and the banquet served at once. O Cœranus, you can not imagine the misery I am thus spared !"

"Berenike !" said the senator, in a warning voice, and he laid his finger on his lips. Then turning to the young supplicant, he said to her in a tone of regret : "So your walk is for nothing, fair maid. If you are as sensible as you are pretty, you will understand that it is too much to ask any one to stand between the lion and the prey which has roused his ire."

The lady, however, did not heed the caution which her brother-in-law intended to convey. As Melissa's imploring eyes met her own, she said, with clear decision :

"Wait here. We shall see who it is that Cæsar sends. I know better than my lord here what it is to see those dear to us in peril. How old are you, child ?"

"Eighteen," replied Melissa.

"Eighteen ?" repeated Berenike, as if the word were a pain to her, for her daughter had been just of that age. Then she said, louder and with encouraging kindness :

"All that lies in my power shall be done for you and yours.—And you, Cœranus, must help me."

"If I can," he replied, "with all the zeal of my reverence for you and my admiration for beauty. But here come the envoys. The elder, I see, is our learned Philostratus, whose works are known to

you; the younger is Theocritus, the favorite of fortune of whom I was telling you. If the charm of that face might but conquer the omnipotent youth—”

“Cœranus!” she exclaimed, with stern reproof; but she failed to hear the senator’s excuses, for her husband, Seleukus, followed her down the steps, and with a hasty sign to her, advanced to meet his guests.

Theocritus was spokesman, and notwithstanding the mourning toga which wrapped him in fine folds, his gestures did not belie his origin as an actor and dancer. When Seleukus presented him to his wife, Theocritus assured her that when, but an hour since, his sovereign lord, who was already dressed and wreathed for the banquet, had learned that the gods had bereft of their only child the couple whose hospitality had promised him such a delightful evening, he had been equally shocked and grieved. Cæsar was deeply distressed at the unfortunate circumstance that he should have happened in his ignorance to intrude on the seclusion which was the prerogative of grief. He begged to assure her and her husband of the high favor of the ruler of the world. As for himself, Theocritus, he would not fail to describe the splendor with which they had decorated their princely residence in Cæsar’s honor. His imperial master would be touched, indeed, to hear that even the bereaved mother, who, like Niobe, mourned for her offspring, had broken the stony spell which held her to Sipylus, and had decked herself to receive the greatest of all earthly guests as radiant as Juno at the golden table of the gods.

The lady succeeded in controlling herself and listening to the end of these pompous phrases without

interrupting the speaker. Every word which flowed so glibly from his tongue fell on her ear as bitter mockery; and he himself was so repugnant to her, that she felt it a release when, after exchanging a few words with the master of the house, he begged leave to retire, as important business called him away. And this, indeed, was the truth. For no consideration would he have left this duty to another, for it was to communicate to Titianus, who had offended him, the intelligence that Cæsar had deprived him of the office of prefect, and intended to examine into certain complaints of his administration.

The second envoy, however, remained, though he refused Seleukus's invitation to fill his place at the banquet. He exchanged a few words with the lady Berenike, and presently found himself taken aside by the senator, and, after a short explanation, led up to Melissa, whom Cœranus desired to appeal for help to Philostratus, the famous philosopher, who enjoyed Cæsar's closest confidence.

Cœranus then obeyed a sign from Berenike, who wished to know whether he would be answerable for introducing this rarely pretty girl, who had placed herself under their protection—and whom she, for her part, meant to protect—to a courtier of whom she knew nothing but that he was a writer of taste.

The question seemed to amuse Cœranus, but, seeing that his sister-in-law was very much in earnest, he dropped his flippant tone and admitted that Philostratus, as a young man, had been one of the last with whom he would trust a girl. His far-famed letters sufficiently proved that the witty philosopher had been a devoted and successful courtier of women. But that was all a thing of the past. He still, no doubt, did homage to female beauty,

but he led a regular life, and had become one of the most ardent and earnest upholders of religion and virtue. He was one of the learned circle which gathered round Julia Domna, and it was by her desire that he had accompanied Caracalla, to keep his mad passions in check when it might be possible.

The conversation between Melissa and the philosopher had meanwhile taken an unexpected turn. At his very first address the reply had died on her lips, for in Cæsar's representative she had recognized the Roman whom she had seen in the Temple of Asklepios, and who had perhaps overheard her there. Philostratus, too, seemed to remember the meeting; for his shrewd face—a pleasing mixture of grave and gay—lighted up at once with a subtle smile as he said:

“If I am not mistaken, I owe the same pleasure this evening to divine Cæsar as to great Asklepios this morning?”

At this, Melissa cast a meaning glance at Cœranus and the lady, and, although surprise and alarm sealed her lips, her uplifted hands and whole gesture sufficiently expressed her entreaty that he would not betray her. He understood and obeyed. It pleased him to share a secret with this fair child. He had, in fact, overheard her, and understood with amazement that she was praying fervently for Cæsar. This stirred his curiosity to the highest pitch. So he said, in an undertone:

“All that I saw and heard in the temple is our secret, sweet maid. But what on earth can have prompted you to pray so urgently for Cæsar? Has he done you or yours any great benefit?”

Melissa shook her head, and Philostratus went on with increased curiosity:

“Then are you one of those whose heart Eros

can fire at the sight of an image, or the mere aspect of a man?"

To this she answered hastily :

"What an idea! No, no. Certainly not."

"No?" said her new friend, with greater surprise. "Then perhaps your hopeful young soul expects that, being still but a youth, he may, by the help of the gods, become, like Titus, a benefactor to the whole world?"

Melissa looked timidly at the matron, who was still talking with her brother-in-law, and hastily replied :

"They all call him a murderer! But I know for certain that he suffers fearful torments of mind and body; and one who knows many things told me that there was not one among all the millions whom Cæsar governs who ever prays for him; and I was so sorry—I can not tell you—"

"And so," interrupted the philosopher, "you thought it praiseworthy and pleasing to the gods that you should be the first and only one to offer sacrifice for him, in secret, and of your own free will? That was how it came about? Well, child, you need not be ashamed of it."

But then suddenly his face clouded, and he asked, in a grave and altered voice:

"Are you a Christian?"

"No," she replied, firmly. "We are Greeks. How could I have offered a sacrifice of blood to Asclepius if I had believed in the crucified god?"

"Then," said Philostratus, and his eyes flashed brightly, "I may promise you, in the name of the gods, that your prayer and offering were pleasing in their eyes. I myself, noble girl, owe you a rare pleasure. But, tell me—how did you feel as you *left* the sanctuary?"

"Light-hearted, my lord, and content," she answered, with a frank, glad look in her fine eyes. "I could have sung as I went down the road, though there were people about."

"I should have liked to hear you," he said, kindly, and he still held her hand, which he had grasped with the amiable geniality that characterized him, when they were joined by the senator and his sister-in-law.

"Has she won your good offices?" asked Cœranus; and Philostratus replied, quickly, "Anything that it lies in my power to do for her shall certainly be done."

Berenike bade them both to join her in her own rooms, for everything that had to do with the banquet was odious to her; and as they went, Melissa told her new friend her brother's story. She ended it in the quiet sitting-room of the mistress of the house, an artistic but not splendid apartment, adorned only with the choicest works of early Alexandrian art. Philostratus listened attentively, but, before she could put her petition for help into words, he exclaimed:

"Then what we have to do is, to move Cæsar to mercy, and that— Child, you know not what you ask!"

They were interrupted by a message from Seleukus, desiring Cœranus to join the other guests, and as soon as he had left them Berenike withdrew to take off the splendor she hated. She promised to return immediately and join their discussion, and Philostratus sat for a while lost in thought. Then he turned to Melissa, and asked her:

"Would you for their sakes be able to make up your mind to face bitter humiliation, nay, perhaps imminent danger?"

"Anything! I would give my life for them!" replied the girl, with spirit, and her eyes gleamed with such enthusiastic self-sacrifice that his heart, though no longer young, warmed under their glow, and the principle to which he had sternly adhered since he had been near the imperial person, never to address a word to the sovereign but in reply, was blown to the winds.

Holding her hand in his, with a keen look into her eyes, he went on:

"And if you were required to do a thing from which many a man even would recoil—you would venture?"

And again the answer was a ready "Yes."

Philostratus released her hand, and said:

"Then we will dare the worst. I will smooth the way for you, and to-morrow—do not start—to-morrow you yourself, under my protection, shall appeal to Cæsar."

The color faded from the girl's cheeks, which had been flushed with fresh hopes, and her counselor had just expressed his wish to talk the matter over with the lady Berenike, when she came into the room. She was now dressed in mourning, and her pale, beautiful face showed the traces of the tears she had just shed. The dark shadows which, when they surround a woman's eyes, betray past storms of grief, as the halo round the moon—the eye of night—gives warning of storms to come, were deeper than ever; and when her sorrowful gaze fell on Melissa, the girl felt an almost irresistible longing to throw herself into her arms and weep on her motherly bosom.

Philostratus, too, was deeply touched by the appearance of this mother, who possessed so much, but for whom everything dearest to a woman's

heart had been destroyed by a cruel stroke of Fate. He was glad to be able to tell her that he hoped to soften Cæsar. Still, his plan was a bold one; Caracalla had been deeply offended by the scornful tone of the attacks on him, and Melissa's brother was perhaps the only one of the scoffers who had been taken. The crime of the Alexandrian wits could not be left unpunished. For such a desperate case only desperate remedies could avail; he therefore ventured to propose to conduct Melissa into Cæsar's presence, that she might appeal to his clemency.

The matron started as though a scorpion had stung her. In great agitation, she threw her arm round the girl as if to shelter her from imminent danger, and Melissa, seeking help, laid her head on that kind breast. Berenike was reminded, by the scent that rose up from the girl's hair, of the hours when her own child had thus fondly clung to her. Her motherly heart had found a new object to love, and exclaiming, "Impossible!" she clasped Melissa more closely.

But Philostratus begged to be heard. Any plea urged by a third person he declared would only be the ruin of the rash mediator.

"Caracalla," he went on, looking at Melissa, "is terrible in his passions, no one can deny that; but of late severe suffering has made him irritably sensitive, and he insists on the strictest virtue in all who are about his person. He pays no heed to female beauty, and this sweet child, at any rate, will find many protectors. He shall know that the high-priest's wife, one of the best of women, keeps an anxious eye on Melissa's fate; and I myself, his mother's friend, shall be at hand. His passion for revenge, on the other hand, is boundless—no one



living can control it; and not even the noble Julia can shield those who provoke it from a cruel end. If you do not know it, child, I can tell you that he had his brother Geta killed, though he took refuge in the arms of the mother who bore them both. You must understand the worst; and again I ask you, are you ready to risk all for those you love? Have you the courage to venture into the lion's den?"

Melissa clung more closely to the motherly woman, and her pale lips answered faintly but firmly, "I am ready, and he will grant my prayer."

"Child, child," cried Berenike in horror, "you know not what lies before you! You are dazzled by the happy confidence of inexperienced youth. I know what life is. I can see you, in your heart's blood, as red and pure as the blood of a lamb! I see— Ah, child! you do not know death and its terrible reality."

"I know it!" Melissa broke in with feverish excitement. "My dearest—my mother—I saw her die with these eyes. What did I not bury in her grave! And yet hope still lived in my heart; and though Caracalla may be a reckless murderer, he will do nothing to me, precisely because I am so feeble. And, lady, what am I? Of what account is my life if I lose my father, and my brothers, who are both on the high-road to greatness?"

"But you are betrothed," Berenike eagerly put in. "And your lover, you told me, is dear to you. What of him? He no doubt loves you, and, if you come to harm, sorrow will mar his young life."

At this Melissa clasped her hands over her face and sobbed aloud. "Show me, then, any other way—any! I will face the worst. But there is none; and if Diodoros were here he would not stop

me; for what my heart prompts me to do is right, is my duty. But he is lying sick and with a clouded mind, and I can not ask him. O noble lady, kindness looks out of your eyes; cease to rub salt into my wounds! The task before me is hard enough already. But I would do it, and try to get speech with that terrible man, even if I had no one to protect me."

The lady had listened with varying feelings to this outpouring of the young girl's heart. Every instinct rebelled against the thought of sacrificing this pure, sweet creature to the fury of the tyrant whose wickedness was as unlimited as his power, and yet she saw no other chance of saving the artist, whom she held in affectionate regard. Her own noble heart understood the girl's resolve to purchase the life of those she loved, even with her blood; she, in the same place, would have done the same thing; and she thought to herself that it would have made her happy to see such a spirit in her own child. Her resistance melted away, and almost involuntarily she exclaimed, "Well, do what you feel to be right."

Melissa flew into her arms again with a grateful sense of release from a load, and Berenike did all she could to smooth the thorny way for her. She discussed every point with Philostratus as thoroughly as though for a child of her own; and, while the tumult came up from the banquet in the men's rooms, they settled that Berenike herself should conduct the girl to the wife of the high-priest of Serapis, the brother of Seleukus, and there await Melissa's return. Philostratus named the hour and other details, and then made further inquiries concerning the young artist whose mocking spirit had brought so much trouble on his family.

On this the lady led him into an adjoining room, where the portrait of her adored daughter was hanging. It was surrounded by a thick wreath of violets, the dead girl's favorite flower. The beautiful picture was lighted up by two three-branched lamps on high stands; and Philostratus, a connoisseur who had described many paintings with great taste and vividness, gazed in absorbed silence at the lovely features, which were represented with rare mastery and the inspired devotion of loving admiration. At last he turned to the mother, exclaiming:

"Happy artist, to have such a subject! It is a work worthy of the early, best period, and of a master of the time of Apelles. The daughter who has been snatched from you, noble lady, was indeed matchless, and no sorrow is too deep to do her justice. But the divinity who has taken her knows also how to give; and this portrait has preserved for you a part of what you loved. This picture, too, may influence Melissa's fate; for Cæsar has a fine taste in art, and one of the wants of our time which has helped to embitter him is the paralyzed state of the imitative arts. It will be easier to win his favor for the painter who did this portrait than for a man of noble birth. He needs such painters as this Alexander for the Pinakothek in the splendid baths he has built at Rome. If you would but lend me this treasure to-morrow—"

But she interrupted him with a decisive "Never!" and laid her hand on the frame as if to protect it.

Philostratus, however, was not to be put off; he went on in a tone of the deepest disappointment: "This portrait is yours, and no one can wonder at your refusal. We must, therefore, consider how to attain our end without this important ally."

Berenike's gaze had lingered calmly on the sweet

face while he spoke, looking more and more deeply into the beautiful, expressive features. All was silent.

At last she slowly turned to Melissa, who stood gazing sadly at the ground, and said in a low voice:

"She resembled you in many ways. The gods had formed her to shed joy and light around her. Where she could wipe away a tear she always did so. Her portrait is speechless, and yet it tells me to act as she herself would have acted. If this work can indeed move Caracalla to clemency, then— You, Philostratus, really think so?"

"Yes," he replied, decisively. "There can be no better mediator for Alexander than this work."

Berenike drew herself up, and said:

"Well, then, to-morrow morning early I will send it to you at the Serapeum. The portrait of the dead may perish if it may but save the life of him who wrought it so lovingly." She turned away her face as she gave the philosopher her hand, and then hastily left the room.

Melissa flew after her and, with overflowing gratitude, besought the sobbing lady not to weep.

"I know something that will bring you greater comfort than my brother's picture: I mean the living image of your Korinna—a young girl; she is here in Alexandria."

"Zeno's daughter Agatha?" said Berenike; and when Melissa said yes, it was she, the lady went on with a deep sigh: "Thanks for your kind thought, my child; but she, too, is lost to me."

And as she spoke she sank on a couch, saying, in a low voice, "I would rather be alone."

Melissa modestly withdrew into the adjoining room, and Philostratus, who had been lost in the contemplation of the picture, took his leave.

He did not make use of the imperial chariot in waiting for him, but returned to his lodgings on foot, in such good spirits, and so well satisfied with himself, as he had not been before since leaving Rome.

When Berenike had rested in solitude for some little time she recalled Melissa, and took as much care of her young guest as though she were her lost darling, restored to her after a brief absence. First she allowed the girl to send for Argutis; and when she had assured the faithful slave that all promised well, she dismissed him with instructions to await at home his young mistress's orders, for that Melissa would for the present find shelter under her roof.

When the Gaul had departed, she desired her waiting-woman, Johanna, to fetch her brother. During her absence the lady explained to Melissa that they both were Christians. They were free-born, the children of a freedman of Berenike's house. Johannes had at an early age shown so much intelligence that they had acceded to his wish to be educated as a lawyer. He was now one of the most successful pleaders in the city; but he always used his eloquence, which he had perfected not only at Alexandria but also at Carthage, by preference in the service of accused Christians. In his leisure hours he would visit the condemned in prison, speak comfort to them, and give them presents out of the fine profits he derived from his business among the wealthy. He was the very man to go and see her father and brothers; he would revive their spirits, and carry them her greeting.

When, presently, the Christian arrived he expressed himself as very ready to undertake this commission. His sister was already busied in packing wine and other comforts for the captives—more,

no doubt, as Johannes told Berenike, than the three men could possibly consume, even if their imprisonment should be a long one. His smile showed how confidently he counted on the lady's liberality, and Melissa quickly put her faith in the young Christian, who would have reminded her of her brother Philip, but that his slight figure was more upright, and his long hair quite smooth, without a wave or curl. His eyes, above all, were unlike Philip's; for they looked out on the world with a gaze as mild as Philip's were keen and inquiring.

Melissa gave him many messages for her father and brothers, and when the lady Berenike begged him to take care that the portrait of her daughter was safely carried to the Serapeum, where it was to contribute to mollify Cæsar in the painter's favor, he praised her determination, and modestly added: "For how long may we call our own any of these perishable joys? A day, perhaps a year, at most a lustrum. But eternity is long, and those who, for its sake, forget time and set all their hopes on eternity—which is indeed time to the soul—soon cease to bewail the loss of any transitory treasure, were it the noblest and dearest. Oh, would that I could lead you to place your hopes on eternity, best of women and most true-hearted mother! Eternity, which not the wisest brain can conceive of!—I tell you, lady, for you are a philosopher—that is the hardest and therefore the grandest idea for human thought to compass. Fix your eye on that, and in its infinite realm, which must be your future home, you will meet her again whom you have lost—not her image returned to you, but herself."

"Cease," interrupted the matron, with impatient sharpness. "I know what you are aiming at. But to conceive of eternity is the prerogative of the im-

mortals ; our intellect is wrecked in the attempt. Our wings melt like those of Ikarus, and we fall into the ocean—the ocean of madness, to which I have often been near enough. You Christians fancy you know all about eternity, and if you are right in that— But I will not reopen that old discussion. Give me back my child for a year, a month, a day even, as she was before murderous disease laid hands on her, and I will make you a free gift of your cuckoo-cloud-land of eternity, and of the remainder of my own life on earth into the bargain.”

The vehement woman trembled with renewed sorrow, as if shivering with ague ; but as soon as she had recovered her self-command enough to speak calmly, she exclaimed to the lawyer :

“ I do not really wish to vex you, Johannes. I esteem you, and you are dear to me. But if you wish our friendship to continue, give up these foolish attempts to teach tortoises to fly. Do all you can for the poor prisoners ; and if you—”

“ By daybreak to-morrow I will be with them,” Johannes said, and he hastily took leave.

As soon as they were alone Berenike observed : “ There he goes, quite offended, as if I had done him a wrong. That is the way with all these Christians. They think it their duty to force on others what they themselves think right, and any one who turns a deaf ear to their questionable truths they at once set down as narrow-minded, or as hostile to what is good. Agatha, of whom you were just now speaking, and Zeno her father, my husband's brother, are Christians. I had hoped that Korinna's death would have brought the child back to us ; I have longed to see her, and have heard much that is sweet about her : but a common sorrow, which so often brings divided hearts together, has only widened the gulf be-

tween my husband and his brother. The fault is not on our side. Nay, I was rejoiced when, a few hours after the worst was over, a letter from Zeno informed me that he and his daughter would come to see us the same evening. But the letter itself—and her voice began to quiver with indignation—“compelled us to beg him not to come. It is scarcely credible—and I should do better not to pour fresh oil on my wrath—but he bade us ‘rejoice’; three, four, five times he repeated the cruel words. And he wrote in a pompous strain of the bliss and rapture which awaited our lost child—and this to a mother whose heart had been utterly broken but a few hours before by a fearful stroke of Fate! He would meet the bereaved, grieving, lonely mourner with a smile on his lips! Rejoice! This climax of cruelty or aberration has parted us forever. Why, our black gardener, whose god is a tree-stump that bears only the faintest likeness to humanity, melted into tears at the news; and Zeno, our brother, the uncle of that broken flower, could be glad and bid us rejoice! My husband thinks that hatred and the long-standing feud prompted his pen. For my part, I believe it was only this Christian frenzy which made him suggest that I should sink lower than the brutes, who defend their young with their lives. Seleukus has long since forgiven him for his conduct in withdrawing his share of the capital from the business when he became a Christian, to squander it on the baser sort; but this ‘Rejoice’ neither he nor I can forgive, though things which pierce me to the heart often slide off him like water off grease.”

Her black hair had come down as she delivered this vehement speech, and, when she ceased, her flushed cheeks and the fiery glow of her eyes gave



the majestic woman in her dark robes an aspect which terrified Melissa.

She, too, thought this "Rejoice," under such circumstances, unseemly and insulting; but she kept her opinion to herself, partly out of modesty and partly because she did not wish to encourage the estrangement between this unhappy lady and the niece whose mere presence would have been so great a comfort to her.

When Johanna returned to lead her to a bedroom, she gave a sigh of relief; but the lady expressed a wish to keep Melissa near her, and in a low voice desired the waiting-woman to prepare a bed for her in the adjoining room, by the side of Korinna's, which was never to be disturbed. Then, still greatly excited, she invited Melissa into her daughter's pretty room.

There she showed her everything that Korinna had especially cared for. Her bird hung in the same place; her lap-dog was sleeping in a basket, on the cushion which Berenike had embroidered for her child. Melissa had to admire the dead girl's lute, and her first piece of weaving, and the elegant loom of ebony and ivory in which she had woven it. And Berenike repeated to the girl the verses which Korinna had composed, in imitation of Catullus, on the death of a favorite bird. And although Melissa's eyes were almost closing with fatigue, she forced herself to attend to it all, for she saw now how much her sympathy pleased her kind friend.

Meanwhile the voices of the men, who had done eating and were now drinking, came louder and louder into the women's apartments. When the merriment of her guests rose to a higher pitch than usual, or something amusing gave rise to a shout of laughter, Berenike shrank, and either muttered

some unintelligible threat or besought the forgiveness of her daughter's manes.

It seemed to be a relief to her to rush from one mood to the other; but neither in her grief, nor when her motherly feeling led her to talk, nor yet in her wrath, did she lose her perfect dignity. All Melissa saw and heard moved her to pity or to horror. And meanwhile she was worn out with anxiety for her family, and with increasing fatigue.

At last, however, she was released. A gay chorus of women's voices and flutes came up from the banqueting-hall. With a haughty mien and dilated nostrils Berenike listened to the first few bars. That such a song should be heard in her house of woe was too much; with her own hand she closed the shutters over the window next her; then she bade her young guest go to bed.

Oh, how glad was the overtired girl to stretch herself on the soft couch! As usual, before going to sleep, she told her mother in the spirit all the history of the day. Then she prayed to the manes of the departed to lend her aid in the heavy task before her; but in the midst of her prayer sleep overcame her, and her young bosom was already rising and falling in regular breathing when she was roused by a visit from the lady Berenike.

Melissa suddenly beheld her at the head of the bed, in a flowing white night-dress, with her hair unpinned, and holding a silver lamp in her hand; and the girl involuntarily put up her arms as if to protect herself, for she fancied that the dæmon of madness stared out of those large black eyes. But the unhappy woman's expression changed, and she looked down kindly on Melissa. She quietly set the lamp on the table, and then, as the cool night-breeze blew in through the open window, to which

there was no shutter, she tenderly wrapped the white woolen blanket round Melissa, and muttered to herself, "She liked it so."

Then she knelt down by the side of the bed, pressed her lips on the brow of the girl, now fully awake, and said :

"And you, too, are fair to look upon. He will grant your prayer!"

Then she asked Melissa about her lover, her father, her mother, and at last she, unexpectedly, asked her in a whisper :

"Your brother Alexander, the painter— My daughter, though in death, inspired his soul with love. Yes, Korinna was dear to him. Her image is living in his soul. Am I right? Tell me the truth!"

On this Melissa confessed how deeply the painter had been impressed by the dead girl's beauty, and that he had given her his heart and soul with a fervor of devotion of which she had never imagined him capable. And the poor mother smiled as she heard it, and murmured, "I was sure of it."

But then she shook her head, sadly, and said :

"Fool that I am!"

At last she bade Melissa good-night, and went back to her own bedroom. There Johanna was awaiting her, and while she was plaiting her mistress's hair the matron said, threateningly :

"If the wretch should not spare even her—"

She was interrupted by loud shouts of mirth from the banqueting-hall, and among the laughing voices she fancied that she recognized her husband's. She started up with a vehement movement, and exclaimed, in angry excitement :

"Seleukus might have prevented such an out-

rage! Oh, I know that sorrowing father's heart!  
Fear, vanity, ambition, love of pleasure—"

"But consider," Johanna broke in, "to cross  
Cæsar's wish is to forfeit life!"

"Then he should have died!" replied the ma-  
tron, with stern decision.

## CHAPTER XVI.

BEFORE sunrise the wind changed. Heavy clouds bore down from the north, darkening the clear sky of Alexandria. By the time the market was filling it was raining in torrents, and a cold breeze blew over the town from the lake. Philostratus had only allowed himself a short time for sleep, sitting till long after midnight over his history of Apollonius of Tyana. His aim was to prove, by the example of this man, that a character not less worthy of imitation than that of the lord of the Christians might be formed in the faith of the ancients, and nourished by doctrines produced by the many-branched tree of Greek religion and philosophy. Julia Domna, Caracalla's mother, had encouraged the philosopher in this task, which was to show her passionate and criminal son the dignity of moderation and virtue. The book was also to bring home to Cæsar the religion of his forefathers and his country in all its beauty and elevating power; for hitherto he had vacillated from one form to another, had not even rejected Christianity, with which his nurse had tried to inoculate him as a child, and had devoted himself to every superstition of his time in a way which had disgusted those about him. It had been particularly interesting to the writer, with a view to the purpose of this work, to meet with a girl who practiced all the virtues the Christians most highly

prized, without belonging to that sect, who were always boasting of the constraining power of their religion in conducing to pure morality.

In his work the day before he had taken occasion to regret the small recognition his hero had met with among those nearest to him. In this, as in other respects, he seemed to have shared the fate of Jesus Christ, whose name, however, Philostratus purposely avoided mentioning. Now, to-night, he reflected on the sacrifice offered by Melissa for Cæsar whom she knew not, and he wrote the following words as though proceeding from the pen of Apollonius himself: "I know well how good a thing it is to regard all the world as my home, and all mankind as my brethren and friends; for we are all of the same divine race, and have all one Father."

Then, looking up from the papyrus, he murmured to himself: "From such a point of view as this Melissa might see in Caracalla a friend and a brother. If only now it were possible to rouse the conscience of that imperial criminal!"

He took up the written sheet on which he had begun a dissertation as to what conscience is, as exerting a choice between good and evil. He had written: "Understanding governs what we purpose; consciousness governs what our understanding resolves upon. Hence, if our understanding choose the good, consciousness is satisfied."

How flat it sounded! It could have no effect in that form.

Melissa had confessed with far greater warmth what her feelings had been after she had sacrificed for the suffering sinner. Every one, no doubt, would feel the same who, when called on to choose between good and evil, should prefer the good; so he altered and expanded the last words: "Thus con-

sciousness sends a man with song and gladness into the sanctuaries and groves, into the roads, and wherever mortals live. Even in sleep the song makes itself heard, and a happy choir from the land of dreams lift up their voices about his bed."

That was better! This pleasing picture might perhaps leave some impression on the soul of the young criminal, in whom a preference for good could still, though rarely, be fanned to a flame. Cæsar read what Philostratus wrote, because he took pleasure in the form of his work; and this sentence would not have been written in vain if only it should prompt Caracalla in some cases, however few, to choose the good.

The philosopher was fully determined to do his utmost for Melissa and her brothers. He had often brought pictures under Cæsar's notice, for he was the first living authority as a connoisseur of painting, and as having written many descriptions of pictures. He built some hopes, too, on Melissa's innocence; and so the worthy man, when he retired to rest, looked forward with confidence to the work of mediation, which was by no means devoid of danger.

But next morning it presented itself in a less promising light. The clouded sky, the storm, and rain might have a fatal effect on Cæsar's temper; and when he heard that old Galen, after examining his patient and prescribing certain remedies, had yesterday evening taken ship, leaving Caracalla in a frenzy of rage which had culminated in slight convulsions, he almost repented of his promise. However, he felt himself pledged; so as early as possible he went to Cæsar's rooms, prepared for the worst.

His gloomy anticipations were aggravated by the scene which met his eyes.

In the anteroom he found the chief men of the city and some representative members of the Alexandrian Senate, who were anxious for an audience of their imperial visitor. They had been commanded to attend at an unusually early hour, and had already been kept a long time waiting.

When Philostratus—who was always free to enter Cæsar's presence—made his appearance, Caracalla was seating himself on the throne which had been placed for him in the splendidly fitted audience-chamber. He had come from his bath, and was wrapped in the comfortable white woolen robe which he wore on leaving it. His "friends" as they were called, senators, and other men of mark, stood round in considerable numbers, among them the high-priest of Serapis. Pandion, Cæsar's charioteer, was occupied, under the sovereign's instructions, in fastening the lion's chain to the ring fixed for the purpose in the floor by the side of the throne; and as the beast, whose collar had been drawn too tight, uttered a low, complaining growl, Caracalla scolded the favorite. As soon as he caught sight of Philostratus, he signed to him to approach:

"Do you see nothing strange in me?" he whispered. "Your Phœbus Apollo appeared to me in a dream. He laid his hand on my shoulder toward morning; indeed, I saw only horrible faces."

Then he pointed out of the window, exclaiming: "The god hides his face to-day. Gloomy days have often brought me good fortune; but this is a strange experience of the eternal sunshine of Egypt! Men and sky have given me the same kind welcome; gray, gray, and always gray—without and within—and my poor soldiers out on the square! Macrinus tells me they are complaining. But my father's advice was sound: "Keep them content, and never mind



anything else." The heads of the town are waiting outside; they must give up their palaces to the body-guard; if they murmur, let them try for themselves how they like sleeping on the soaking ground under dripping tents. It may cool their hot blood, and perhaps dilute the salt of their wit.—Show them in, Theocritus."

He signed to the actor, and when he humbly asked whether Cæsar had forgotten to exchange his morning wrapper for another dress, Caracalla laughed contemptuously, and replied:

"Why, an empty corn-sack over my shoulders would be dress enough for this rabble of traders!" He stretched his small but muscular frame out at full length, resting his head on his hand, and his comely face, which had lost the suffering look it had worn the day before, suddenly changed in expression. As was his habit when he wished to inspire awe or fear, he knit his brows in deep furrows, set his teeth tightly, and assumed a suspicious and sinister scowl.

The deputation entered, bowing low, headed by the exegetes, the head of the city, and Timotheus, the chief-priest of Serapis. After these came the civic authorities, the members of the senate, and then, as representing the large Jewish colony in the city, their alabarch or head-man. It was easy to see in each one as he came in, that the presence of the lion, who had raised his head at their approach, was far from encouraging; and a faint, scornful smile parted Caracalla's lips as he noted the cowering knees of these gorgeously habited courtiers. The high-priest alone, who, as Cæsar's host, had gone up to the side of the throne, and two or three others, among them the governor of the town, a tall, elderly man of Macedonian descent, paid no

heed to the brute. The Macedonian bowed to his sovereign with calm dignity, and in the name of the municipality hoped he had rested well. He then informed Cæsar what shows and performances were prepared in his honor, and finally named the considerable sum which had been voted by the town of Alexandria to express to him their joy at his visit. Caracalla waved his hand, and said, carelessly :

"The priest of Alexander, as idiologos, will receive the gold with the temple tribute. We can find use for it. We knew that you were rich. But what do you want for your money? What have you to ask?"

"Nothing, noble Cæsar," replied the governor. "Thy gracious presence—"

Caracalla interrupted him with a long-drawn "Indeed!" Then, leaning forward, he gave him a keen, oblique look. "No one but the gods has nothing to wish for; so it must be that you are afraid to ask. What can that avail, unless to teach me that you look for nothing but evil from me; that you are suspicious of me? And if that is so, you fear me; and if you fear, you hate me. The insults I have received in this house sufficiently prove the fact. And if you hate me," and he sprang up and shook his fist, "I must protect myself!"

"Great Cæsar," the exegetes began, in humble deprecation, but Caracalla went on, wrathfully :

"I know when I have to protect myself, and from whom. It is not well to trifle with me! An insolent tongue is easily hidden behind the lips; but heads are less easy to hide, and I shall be content with them. Tell that to your Alexandrian wits! Macrinus will inform you of all else. You may go."

During this speech the lion, excited by his mas-

ter's furious gestures, had risen on his feet and showed his terrible teeth to the delegates. At this their courage sank. Some laid their hands on their bent knees, as if to shield them; others had gradually sidled to the door before Cæsar had uttered the last word. Then, in spite of the efforts of the governor and the alabarch to detain them, in the hope of pacifying the potentate, as soon as they heard the word "go," they hurried out; and, for better or for worse, the few bolder spirits had to follow.

As soon as the door was closed upon them, Cæsar's features lost their cruel look. He patted the lion with soothing words of praise, and exclaimed, contemptuously:

"These are the descendants of the Macedonians, with whom the greatest of heroes conquered the world! Who was that fat old fellow who shrank into himself so miserably, and made for the door while I was yet speaking?"

"Kimon, the chief of the night-watch and guardian of the peace of the city," replied the high-priest of Alexander, who as a Roman had kept his place by the throne; and Theocritus put in:

"The people must sleep badly under the ward of such a coward. Let him follow the prefect, noble Cæsar."

"Send him his dismissal at once," said Caracalla; "but see that his successor is a man."

He then turned to the high-priest, and politely requested him to assist Theocritus in choosing a new head for the town-guard, and Timotheus and the favorite quitted the room together.

Philostratus took ingenious advantage of the incident, by at once informing the emperor that it had come to his knowledge that this coward, so worthily dismissed from office, had, on the merest

suspicion, cast into prison a painter who was undoubtedly one of the first of living artists, and with him his guiltless relations.

"I will not have it!" Cæsar broke out. "Nothing but blood will do any good here, and petty aggravations will only stir their bile and increase their insolence. Is the painter of whom you speak an Alexandrian?—I pine for the open air, but the wind blows the rain against the windows."

"In the field," the philosopher remarked, "you have faced the weather heroically enough. Here, in the city, enjoy what is placed before you. Only yesterday I still believed that the art of Apelles was utterly degenerate. But since then I have changed my opinion, for I have seen a portrait which would be an ornament to the Pinakothek in your baths. The northern windows are closed, or, in this land of inundations, and in such weather as this, we might find ourselves afloat even under cover of a roof; so it is too dark here to judge of a painting, but your dressing-room is more favorably situated, and the large window there will serve our purpose. May I be allowed the pleasure of showing you there the work of the imprisoned artist?"

Cæsar nodded, and led the way, accompanied by his lion and followed by the philosopher, who desired an attendant to bring in the picture.

In this room it was much lighter than in the audience-chamber, and while Caracalla awaited, with Philostratus, the arrival of the painting, his Indian body-slave, a gift from the Parthian king, silently and skillfully dressed his thin hair. The sovereign sighed deeply, and pressed his hand to his brow as though in pain. The philosopher ventured to approach him, and there was warm sympathy in his tone as he asked:

"What ails you, Bassianus? Just now you bore all the appearance of a healthy, nay, and of a terrible man!"

"It is better again already," replied the sovereign. "And yet—!"

He groaned again, and then confessed that only yesterday he had in the same way been tortured with pain.

"The attack came on in the morning, as you know," he went on, "and when it was past I went down into the court of sacrifice; my feet would scarcely carry me. Curiosity—and they were waiting for me; and some great sign might be shown! Besides, some excitement helps me through this torment. But there was nothing—nothing! Heart, lungs, liver, all in their right place.—And then, Galenus—What I like is bad for me, what I loathe is wholesome. And again and again the same foolish question, 'Do you wish to escape an early death?' And all with an air as though Death were a slave at his command.—He can, no doubt, do more than others, and has preserved his own life I know not how long. Well, and it is his duty to prolong mine. I am Cæsar. I had a right to insist on his remaining here. I did so; for he knows my malady, and describes it as if he felt it himself. I ordered him—nay, I entreated him. But he adhered to his own way. He went—he is gone!"

"But he may be of use to you, even at a distance," Philostratus said.

"Did he do anything for my father, or for me in Rome, where he saw me every day?" retorted Cæsar. "He can mitigate and relieve the suffering, but that is all; and of all the others, is there one fit to hand him a cup of water? Perhaps he would be *willing* to cure me, but he can not; for I tell you,

Philostratus, the gods will not have it so. You know what sacrifices I have offered, what gifts I have brought. I have prayed, I have abased myself before them, but none will hear. One or another of the gods, indeed, appears to me not infrequently as Apollo did last night. But is it because he favors me? First, he laid his hand on my shoulder, as my father used to do; but his was so heavy, that the weight pressed me down till I fell on my knees, crushed. This is no good sign, you think? I see it in your face. I do not myself think so. And how loudly I have called on him, of all the gods! The whole empire, they say, men and women alike, besought the immortals unbidden for the welfare of Titus. I, too, am their lord; but"—and he laughed bitterly—"who has ever raised a hand in prayer for me of his own impulse? My own mother always named my brother first. He has paid for it.—But the rest!"

"They fear rather than love you," replied the philosopher. "He to whom Phœbus Apollo appears may always expect some good to follow. And yesterday—a happy omen, too—I overheard by chance a young Greek girl, who believed herself unobserved, who of her own prompting fervently entreated Asklepios to heal you. Nay, she collected all the coins in her little purse, and had a goat and a cock sacrificed in your behalf."

"And you expect me to believe that!" said Caracalla, with a scornful laugh.

But Philostratus eagerly replied:

"It is the pure truth. I went to the little temple because it was said that Apollonius had left some documents there. Every word from his pen is, as you know, of value to me in writing his history. The little library was screened off from the cella

by a curtain, and while I was hunting through the manuscripts I heard a woman's voice."

"It spoke for some other Bassianus, Antoninus, Tarautus, or whatever they choose to call me," Cæsar broke in.

"Nay, my lord, not so. She prayed for you, the son of Severus. I spoke to her afterwards. She had seen you yesterday morning, and fancied she had noted how great and severe your sufferings were. This had gone to her heart. So she went thither to pray and sacrifice for you, although she knew that you were prosecuting her brother, the very painter of whom I spoke. I would you too could have heard how fervently she addressed the god, and then Hygeia!"

"A Greek, you say?" Caracalla remarked. "And she really did not know you, or dream that you could hear her?"

"No, my lord; assuredly not. She is a sweet maid, and if you would care to see her—"

Cæsar had listened to the tale with great attention and evident expectancy; but suddenly his face clouded, and, heedless of the slaves who, under the guidance of his chamberlain Adventus, had now brought in the portrait, he sprang up, went close to Philostratus, and stormed out:

"Woe to you if you lie to me! You want to get the brother out of prison, and then, by chance, you come across the sister who is praying for me! A fable to cheat a child with!"

"I am speaking the truth," replied Philostratus, coolly, though the rapid winking of Cæsar's eyelids warned him that his blood was boiling with wrath. "It was from the sister, whom I overheard in the temple, that I learned of her brother's peril, and I afterward saw that portrait."

Caracalla stared at the floor for a moment in silence; then he looked up, and said, in a tone husky with agitation:

"I only long for anything which may bring me nearer to the perverse race over whom I rule, be it what it may. You offer it me. You are the only man who never asked me for anything. I have believed you to be as righteous as all other men are not. And now if you, if this time—"

He lowered his tones, which had become somewhat threatening, and went on very earnestly: "By all you hold most sacred on earth, I ask you, Did the girl pray for me, and of her own free impulse, not knowing that any one could hear her?"

"I swear it, by the head of my mother!" replied Philostratus, solemnly.

"Your mother?" echoed Cæsar, and his brow began to clear. But suddenly the gleam of satisfaction, which for a moment had embellished his features, vanished, and with a sharp laugh he added: "And my mother! Do you suppose that I do not know what she requires of you? It is solely to please her that you, a free man, remain with me. For her sake you are bold enough to try now and then to quell the stormy sea of my passions. You do it with a grace, so I submit. And now my hand is raised to strike a wretch who mocks at me; he is a painter, of some talent, so, of course, you take him under your protection. Then, in a moment, your inventive genius devises a praying sister. Well, there is in that something which might indeed mollify me. But you would betray Bassianus ten times over to save an artist. And then, how my mother would fly to show her gratitude to the man who could quell her furious son! Your mother!—But I only squint when it suits me. My eye must become



dimmer than it yet is before I fail to see the connection of ideas which led you to swear by your mother. You were thinking of mine when you spoke. To please her, you would deceive her son. But as soon as he touches the lie it vanishes into thin air, for it has no more substance than a soap-bubble!" The last words were at once sad, angry, and scornful; but the philosopher, who had listened at first with astonishment and then with indignation, could no longer contain himself.

"Enough!" he cried to the angry potentate, in an imperious tone. Then, drawing himself up, he went on with offended dignity:

"I know what the end has been of so many who have aroused your wrath, and yet I have courage enough to tell you to your face, that to injustice, the outcome of distrust, you add the most senseless insult. Or do you really think that a just man—for so you have called me more than once—would outrage the manes of the beloved woman who bore him to please the mother of another man, even though she be Cæsar's? What I swear to by the head of my mother, friend and foe alike must believe; and he who does not, must hold me to be the vilest wretch on earth; my presence can only be an offense to him. So I beg you to allow me to return to Rome."

The words were manly and spoken firmly, and they pleased Caracalla; for the joy of believing in the philosopher's statement outweighed every other feeling. And since he regarded Philostratus as the incarnation of goodness—though he had lost faith in that—his threat of leaving disturbed him greatly. He laid his hand on his brave adviser's arm, and assured him that he was only too happy to believe a thing so incredible.

Any witness of the scene would have supposed this ruthless fatricide, this tyrant—whose intercourse with the visions of a crazed and unbridled fancy made him capable of any folly, and who loved to assume the aspect of a cruel misanthrope—to be a docile disciple, who cared for nothing but to recover the favor and forgiveness of his master. And Philostratus, knowing this man, and the human heart, did not make it too easy for him to achieve his end. When he at last gave up his purpose of returning to Rome, and had more fully explained to Cæsar how and where he had met Melissa, and what he had heard about her brother the painter, he lifted the wrapper from Korinna's portrait, placed it in a good light, and pointed out to Caracalla the particular beauties of the purely Greek features.

It was with sincere enthusiasm that he expatiated on the skill with which the artist had reproduced in color the noble lines which Caracalla so much admired in the sculpture of the great Greek masters; how warm and tender the flesh was; how radiant the light of those glorious eyes; how living the waving hair, as though it still breathed of the scented oil! And when Philostratus explained that though Alexander had no doubt spoken some rash and treasonable words, he could not in any case be the author of the insulting verses which had been found at the Serapeum with the rope, Caracalla echoed his praises of the picture, and desired to see both the painter and his sister.

That morning, as he rose from his bed, he had been informed that the planets which had been seen during the past night from the observatory of the Serapeum, promised him fortune and happiness in the immediate future. He was himself a practiced star-reader, and the chief astrologer of the

temple had pointed out to him how peculiarly favorable the constellation was whence he had deduced his prediction. Then, Phœbus Apollo had appeared to him in a dream; the auguries from the morning's sacrifices had all been favorable; and, before he dispatched Philostratus to fetch Melissa, he added:

"It is strange! The best fortune has always come to me from a gloomy sky. How brightly the sun shone on my marriage with the odious Plautilla! It has rained, on the contrary, on almost all my victories; and it was under a heavy storm that the oracle assured me the soul of Alexander the Great had selected this tortured frame in which to live out his too early ended years on earth. Can such coincidence be mere chance? Phœbus Apollo, your favorite divinity—and that, too, of the sage of Tyana—may perhaps have been angry with me. He who purified himself from blood-guiltiness after killing the Python is the god of expiation. I will address myself to him, like the noble hero of your book. This morning the god visited me again; so I will have such sacrifice slain before him as never yet was offered. Will that satisfy you, O philosopher hard to be appeased?"

"More than satisfy me, my Bassianus," replied Philostratus. "Yet remember that, according to Apollonius, the sacrifice is effective only through the spirit in which it is offered."

"Always a 'but' and an 'if'!" exclaimed Caracalla, as his friend left the room to call Melissa from the high-priest's quarters, where she was waiting.

For the first time for some days Cæsar found himself alone. Leading the lion by the collar, he went to the window. The rain had ceased, but black clouds still covered the heavens. Below him

lay the opening of the street of Hermes into the great square, swarming with human life, and covered with the now drenched tents of the soldiery; and his eyes fell on that of a centurion, a native of Alexandria, just then receiving a visit from his family, to whom the varied fortunes of a warrior's life had brought him back once more.

The bearded hero held an infant in his arms—assuredly his own—while a girl and boy clung to him, gazing up in his face with wondering black eyes; and another child, of about three, paying no heed to the others, was crowing as it splashed through a puddle with its little bare feet. Two women, one young and one elderly, the man's mother and his wife, no doubt, seemed to hang on his lips as he recounted perhaps some deed of valor.

The tuba sounded to arms. He kissed the infant, and carefully laid it on its mother's bosom; then he took up the boy and the girl, laughingly caught the little one, and pressed his bearded lips to each rosy mouth in turn. Last of all he clasped the young wife to his breast, gently stroked her hair, and whispered something in her ear at which she smiled up at him through her tears and then blushing looked down. His mother patted him fondly on the shoulder, and, as they parted, he kissed her too on her wrinkled brow.

Caracalla had remarked this centurion once before; his name was Martialis, and he was a simple, commonplace, but well-conducted creature, who had often distinguished himself by his contempt for death. The imperial visit to Alexandria had meant for him a return home and the greatest joy in life. How many arms had opened to receive the common soldier; how many hearts had beat high at his coming! Not a day, it was certain, had passed since

his arrival without prayers going up to Heaven for his preservation, from his mother, his wife, and his children. And he, the ruler of the world, had thought it impossible that one, even one of his millions of subjects, should have prayed for him. Who awaited him with a longing heart? Where was his home?

He had first seen the light in Gaul. His father was an African; his mother was born in Syria. The palace at Rome, his residence, he did not care to remember. He traveled about the empire, leaving as wide a space as possible between himself and that house of doom, from which he could never wipe out the stain of his brother's blood.

And his mother? She feared—perhaps she hated him—her first-born son, since he had killed her younger darling. What did she care for him, so long as she had her philosophers to argue with, who knew how to ply her with delicate flattery?

Then Plautilla, his wife? His father had compelled him to marry her, the richest heiress in the world, whose dowry had been larger than the collected treasure of a dozen queens; and as he thought of the sharp features of that insignificant, sour-faced, and unspeakably pretentious creature, he shuddered with aversion.

He had banished her, and then had her murdered. Others had done the deed, and it did not strike him that he was responsible for the crime committed in his service; but her loveless heart, without a care for him—her bird-sharp face, looking out like a well-made mask from her abundant hair—and her red, pinched lips, were very present to him. What cutting words those lips could speak; what senseless demands they had uttered; and nothing more insolent could be imagined than her way of

pursing them up if at any time he had suggested a kiss!

His child? One had been born to him, but it had followed its mother into exile and to the grave. The little thing, which he had scarcely known, was so inseparable from its detested mother that he had mourned it no more than her. It was well that the assassins, without any orders from him, should have cut short that wretched life. He could not long for the embraces of the monster which should have united Plautilla's vices and his own.

Among the men about his person, there was not one for whom other hearts beat warmer; no creature that loved him excepting his lion; no spot on earth where he was looked for with gladness. He waited, as for some marvel, to see the one human being who had spontaneously entreated the gods for him. The girl must probably be a poor, tearful creature, as weak of brain as she was soft-hearted.

There stood the centurion at the head of his maniple, and raised his staff. Enviably man! How content he looked; how clearly he spoke the word of command! And how healthy the vulgar creature must be—while he, Cæsar, was suffering that acute headache again! He gnashed his teeth, and felt a strong impulse to spoil the happiness of that shameless upstart. If he were sent packing to Spain, now, or to Pontus, there would be an end of his gladness. The centurion should know what it was to be a solitary soul.

Acting on this malignant impulse, he had raised his hand to his mouth to shout the cruel order to a tribune, when suddenly the clouds parted, and the glorious sun of Africa appeared in a blue island amid the ocean of gray, cheering the earth with glowing sheaves of rays. The beams were blinding

as they came reflected from the armor and weapons of the men, reminding Cæsar of the god to whom he had just vowed an unparalleled sacrifice.

Philostratus had often praised Phœbus Apollo above all gods, because wherever he appeared there was light, irradiating not the earth alone but men's souls; and because, as the lord of music and harmony, he aided men to arrive at that morally pure and equable frame of mind which was accordant and pleasing to his glorious nature. Apollo had conquered the dark heralds of the storm, and Caracalla looked up. Before this radiant witness he was ashamed to carry out his dark purpose, and he said, addressing the sun:

"For thy sake, Phœbus Apollo, I spare the man."

Then, pleased with himself, he looked down again. The restraint he had laid upon himself struck him as in fact a great and noble effort, accustomed as he was to yield to every impulse. But at the same time he observed that the clouds, which had so often brought him good fortune, were dispersing, and this gave him fresh uneasiness. Dazzled by the flood of sunshine which poured in at the window, he withdrew discontentedly into the room.

If this bright day were to bring disaster? If the god disdained his offering?

But was not Apollo, perhaps, like the rest of the immortals, an idol of the fancy, living only in the imagination of men who had devised it? Stern thinkers and pious folks, like the skeptics and the Christians, laughed the whole tribe of the Olympians to scorn. Still, the hand of Phœbus Apollo had rested heavily on his shoulders in his dream. His power, after all, might be great. The god must have the promised sacrifice, come what might. Bitter wrath rose up in his soul at this thought, as

it had often done before, with the immortals, against whom he, the all-powerful, was impotent. If only for an hour they could be his subjects, he would make them rue the sufferings by which they spoiled his existence.

"He is called Martialis. I will remember that name," he thought, as he cast a last envious look at the centurion.

How long Philostratus was gone! Solitude weighed on him, and he looked about him wildly, as though seeking some support. An attendant at this moment announced the philosopher, and Caracalla, much relieved, went into the tablinum to meet him. There he sat down on a seat in front of the writing-table strewn with tablets and papyrus-rolls, rearranged the end of the purple toga for which he had exchanged his bathing-robe, rested one foot on the lion's neck and his head on his hand. He would receive this wonderful girl in the character of an anxious sovereign meditating on the welfare of his people.



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE philosopher announced the visitor to Cæsar, and as some little time elapsed before Melissa came in, Caracalla forgot his theatrical assumption, and sat with a drooping head ; for, in consequence, no doubt, of the sunshine which beat on the top of his head, the pain had suddenly become almost unendurably violent.

Without vouchsafing a glance at Melissa, he swallowed one of the alleviating pills left him by Galenus, and hid his face in his hands. The girl came forward, fearless of the lion, for Philostratos had assured her that he was tamed, and most animals were willing to let her touch them. Nor was she afraid of Cæsar himself, for she saw that he was in pain, and the alarm with which she had crossed the threshold gave way to pity. Philostratus kept at her side, and anxiously watched Caracalla.

The courage the simple girl showed in the presence of the ferocious brute, and the not less terrible man, struck him favorably, and his hopes rose as a sunbeam fell on her shining hair, which the lady Berenike had arranged with her own hand, twining it with strands of white Bombyx. She must appear, even to this ruthless profligate, as the very type of pure and innocent grace.

Her long robe and peplos, of the finest white wool, also gave her an air of distinction which

suited the circumstances. It was a costly garment, which Berenike had had made for Korinna, and she had chosen it from among many instead of the plainer robe in which old Dido had dressed her young mistress. With admirable taste the matron had aimed at giving Melissa a simple, dignified aspect, unadorned and almost priestess-like in its severity. Nothing should suggest the desire to attract, and everything must exclude the idea of a petitioner of the poorer and commoner sort.

Philostratus saw that her appearance had been judiciously cared for; but Cæsar's long silence, of which he knew the reason, began to cause him some uneasiness: for, though pain sometimes softened the despot's mood, it more often prompted him to revenge himself, as it were, for his own sufferings, by brutal attacks on the comfort and happiness of others. And, at last, even Melissa seemed to be losing the presence of mind he had admired, for he saw her bosom heave faster and higher, her lips quivered, and her large eyes sparkled through tears.

Cæsar's countenance presently cleared a little. He raised his head, and as his eye met Melissa's she pronounced in a low, sweet voice the pleasant Greek greeting, "Rejoice!"

At this moment the philosopher was seized with a panic of anxiety; he felt for the first time the weight of responsibility he had taken on himself. Never had he thought her so lovely, so enchantingly bewitching as now, when she looked up at Caracalla in sweet confusion and timidity, but wholly possessed by her desire to win the favor of the man who, with a word, could make her so happy or so wretched. If this slave of his passions, whom a mere whim perhaps had moved to insist on the strictest morality in his court, should take a fancy

to this delightful young creature, she was doomed to ruin. He turned pale, and his heart throbbed painfully as he watched the development of the catastrophe for which he had himself prepared the way.

But, once more, the unexpected upset the philosopher's anticipations. Caracalla gazed at the girl in amazement, utterly discomposed, as though some miracle had happened, or a ghost had started from the ground before him. Springing up, while he clutched the back of his chair, he exclaimed:

"What is this? Do my senses deceive me, or is it some base trickery? No, no! My eyes and my memory are good. This girl—"

"What ails thee, Cæsar?" Philostratus broke in, with increasing anxiety.

"Something—something which will silence your foolish doubts—" Cæsar panted out. "Patience—wait. Only a minute, and you shall see.—But, first"—and he turned to Melissa—"what is your name, girl?"

"Melissa," she replied, in a low and tremulous voice.

"And your father's and your mother's?"

"Heron is my father's name, and my mother—she is dead—was called Olympias, the daughter of Philip."

"And you are of Macedonian race?"

"Yes, my lord. My father and mother both were of pure Macedonian descent."

The emperor glanced triumphantly at Philostratus, and briefly exclaiming, "That will do, I think," he clapped his hands, and instantly his old chamberlain, Adventus, hurried in from the adjoining room, followed by the whole band of "Cæsar's friends." Caracalla, however, only said to them:

"You can wait till I call you.—You, Adventus! I want the gem with the marriage of Alexander."

The freedman took the gem out of an ebony casket standing on Cæsar's writing-table, and Caracalla, holding the philosopher by the arm, said, with excited emphasis:

"That gem I inherited from my father, the divine Severus. It was engraved before that child came into the world. Now you shall see it, and if you then say that it is an illusion— But why should you doubt it? Pythagoras and your hero Apollonius both knew whose body their souls had inhabited in a former existence. Mine—though my mother has laughed at my belief, and others have dared to do the same—mine, five hundred years ago, dwelt in the greatest of heroes, Alexander the Macedonian—a right royal tabernacle!"

He snatched the gem from the chamberlain's hand, and while he devoured it with his eyes, looking from time to time into Melissa's face, he eagerly ran on:

"It is she. None but a blind man, a fool, a malignant idiot, could doubt it! Any who henceforth shall dare mock at my conviction that I was brought into the world to fulfill the life-span of that great hero, will learn to rue it! Here—it is but natural—here, in the city he founded and which bears his name, I have found positive proof that the bond which unites the son of Philip with the son of Severus is something more than a mere fancy. This maiden—look at her closely—is the re-embodiment of the soul of Roxana, as I am of that of her husband. Even you must see now how naturally it came about that she should uplift her heart and hands in prayer for me. Her soul, when it once dwelt in Roxana, was fondly linked with that of

the hero; and now, in the bosom of this simple maiden, it is drawn to the unforgotten fellow-soul which has found its home in my breast."

He spoke with enthusiastic and firm conviction of the truth of his strange imagining, as though he were delivering a revelation from the gods. He bade Philostratus approach and compare the features of Roxana, as carved in the onyx, with those of the young suppliant.

The fair Persian stood facing Alexander; they were clasping each other's hands in pledge of marriage, and a winged Hymen fluttered above their heads with his flaming torch.

Philostratus was, in fact, startled as he looked at the gem, and expressed his surprise in the liveliest terms, for the features of Roxana as carved in the cameo, no larger than a man's palm, were, line for line, those of the daughter of Heron. And this sport of chance could not but be amazing to any one who did not know—as neither of the three who were examining the gem knew—that it was a work of Heron's youth, and that he had given Roxana the features of his bride Olympias, whose living image her daughter Melissa had grown to be.

"And how long have you had this work of art?" asked Philostratus.

"I inherited it, as I tell you, from my father," replied Caracalla. "Severus sometimes wore it. But wait. After the battle of Issos, in his triumph over Pescennius Niger—I can see him now—he wore it on his shoulder, and that was—"

"Two-and-twenty years ago," the philosopher put in; and Caracalla, turning to Melissa, asked her:

"How old are you, child?"

"Eighteen, my lord." And the reply delighted

Cæsar ; he laughed aloud, and looked triumphantly at Philostratus.

The philosopher willingly admitted that there was something strange in the incident, and he congratulated Cæsar on having met with such strong confirmation of his inward conviction. The soul of Alexander might now do great things through him.

During this conversation the alarm which had come over Melissa at Cæsar's silence had entirely disappeared. The despot whose suffering had appealed to her sympathetic soul, now struck her as singular rather than terrible. The idea that she, the humble artist's daughter, could harbor the soul of a Persian princess, amused her ; and when the lion lifted his head and lashed the floor with his tail at her approach, she felt that she had won his approbation. Moved by a sudden impulse, she laid her hand on his head and boldly stroked it. The light, warm touch soothed the fettered prince of the desert, and, rubbing his brow against Melissa's round arm, he muttered a low, contented growl.

At this Cæsar was enchanted ; it was to him a further proof of his strange fancy. The "Sword of Persia" was rarely so friendly to any one ; and Theocritus owed much of the favor shown him by Caracalla to the fact that at their first meeting the lion had been on particularly good terms with him. Still, the brute had never shown so much liking for any stranger as for this young girl, and never responded with such eager swinging of his tail excepting to Cæsar's own endearments. It must be instinct which had revealed to the beast the old and singular bond which linked his master and this new acquaintance. Caracalla, who, in all that happened to him, traced the hand of a supe-

rior power, pointed this out to Philostratus, and asked him whether, perhaps, the attack of pain he had just suffered might not have yielded so quickly to the presence of the revived Roxana rather than to Galen's pills.

Philostratus thought it wise not to dispute this assumption, and soon diverted the conversation to the subject of Melissa's imprisoned relations. He quietly represented to Caracalla that his noblest task must be to satisfy the spirit of her who had been so dear to the hero whose life he was to fulfill; and Cæsar, who was delighted that the philosopher should recognize as a fact the illusion which flattered him, at once agreed. He questioned Melissa about her brother Alexander with a gentleness of which few would have thought him capable; and the sound of her voice, as she answered him modestly but frankly and with sisterly affection, pleased him so well that he allowed her to speak without interruption longer than was his wont. Finally, he promised her that he would question the painter, and, if possible, be gracious to him.

He again clapped his hands, and ordered a freedman named Epagathos, who was one of his favorite body-servants, to send immediately for Alexander from the prison.

As before, when Adventus had been summoned, a crowd followed Epagathos, and, as Cæsar did not dismiss them, Melissa was about to withdraw; the despot, however, desired her to wait.

Blushing, and confused with shyness, she remained standing by Cæsar's seat; and though she only ventured to raise her eyes now and then for a stolen look, she felt herself the object of a hundred curious, defiant, bold, or contemptuous glances.

How gladly would she have escaped, or have sunk into the earth ! But there she had to stand, her teeth set, while her lips trembled, to check the tears which would rise.

Cæsar, meanwhile, took no further notice of her.

He was longing to relate at full length, to his friends and companions, the wonderful and important thing that had happened ; but he would not approach the subject while they took their places in his presence. Foremost of them, with Theocritus, came the high-priest of Serapis, and Caracalla immediately desired them to introduce the newly appointed head-guardian of the peace. But the election was not yet final. The choice lay, Theocritus explained, between two equally good men. One, Aristides, was a Greek of high repute, and the other was only an Egyptian, but so distinguished for zealous severity that, for his part, he should vote for him.

At this the high-priest broke in, saying that the man favored by Theocritus did in fact possess the qualities for which he was commended, but in such a measure that he was utterly hated by the Greek population ; and in Alexandria more could be achieved by justice and mercy than by defiant severity.

But at this the favorite laughed, and said that he was convinced of the contrary. A populace which could dare to mock at the divine Cæsar, the guest of their city, with such gross audacity, must be made to smart under the power of Rome and its ruler. The deposed magistrate had lost his place for the absurd measures he had proposed, and Aristides was in danger of following in his footsteps.

"By no means," the high-priest said, with calm dignity. "The Greek, whom I would propose, is a



worthy and determined man. Now, Zminis the Egyptian, the right hand of the man who has been turned out, is, it must be said, a wretch without ruth or conscience."

But here the discussion was interrupted. Melissa, whose ears had tingled as she listened, had started with horror as she heard that Zminis, the informer, was to be appointed to the command of the whole watch of the city. If this should happen, her brothers and father were certainly lost. This must be prevented. As the high-priest ceased speaking, she laid her hand on Cæsar's, and, when he looked up at her in surprise, she whispered to him, so low and so quickly that hardly any one observed it: "Not Zminis; he is our mortal enemy!"

Caracalla scarcely glanced at the face of the daring girl, but he saw how pale she had turned.

The delicate color in her cheeks, and the dimple he had seen while she stroked the lion, had struck him as particularly fascinating. This had helped to make her so like the Roxana on the gem, and the change in her roused his pity. She must smile again; and so, accustomed as he was to visit his annoyance on others, he angrily exclaimed to his "Friends":

"Can I be everywhere at once? Can not the simplest matter be settled without me? It was the prætorian prefect's business to report to me concerning the two candidates, if you could not agree; but I have not seen him since last evening. The man who has to be sought when I need him neglects his duty! Macrinus usually knows his. Does any one know what has detained him?"

The question was asked in an angry, nay, in an ominous tone, but the prætorian prefect was a powerful personage, whose importance made him almost invulnerable. Yet the prætor Lucius Priscillianus

was ready with an answer. He was the most malicious and ill-natured scandal-monger at court; and he hated the prefect, for he himself had coveted the post, which was the highest in the state next to Cæsar's. He had always some slaves set to spy upon Macrinus, and he now said, with a contemptuous shrug:

"It is a marvel to me that so zealous a man—though he is already beginning to break down under his heavy duties—should be so late. However, he here spends his evenings and nights in special occupations, which must of course be far from beneficial to the health and peace of mind which his office demands."

"What can those be?" asked Caracalla; but the prætor added without a pause:

"Merciful gods! Who would not crave to glance into the future?"

"And it is that which makes him late?" said Cæsar, with more curiosity than anger.

"Hardly by broad daylight," replied Priscillianus. "The spirits he would fain evoke shun the light of day, it is said. But he may be weary with late watching and painful agitations."

"Then he calls up spirits at night?"

"Undoubtedly, great Cæsar. But, in this capital of philosophy, spirits are illogical it would seem. How can Macrinus interpret the prophecy that he, who is already on the highest step attainable to us lower mortals, shall rise yet higher?"

"We will ask him," said Cæsar, indifferently. "But you—guard your tongue. It has already cost some men their heads, whom I would gladly see yet among the living. Wishes can not be punished. Who does not wish to stand on the step next above his own? You, my friend, would like that of Macri-

nus.—But deeds! You know me! I am safe from them, so long as each of you so sincerely grudges his neighbor every promotion. You, my Lucius, have again proved how keen your sight is, and, if it were not too great an honor for this refractory city to have a Roman in the toga prætexta at the head of its administration, I should like to make you the guardian of the peace here. You see me," he went on, "in an elated mood to-day.—Cilo, you know this gem which came to me from my father. Look at it, and at this maiden.—Come nearer, priest of the divine Alexander; and you too consider the marvel, Theocritus, Antigonus, Dio, Pandion, Paulinus. Compare the face of the female figure with this girl by my side. The master carved this Roxana long before she was born. You are surprised? As Alexander's soul dwells in me, so she is Roxana, restored to life. It has been proved by irrefragable evidence in the presence of Philostratus."

The priest of Alexander here exclaimed, in a tone of firm conviction:

"A marvel indeed! We bow down to the noble vessel of the soul of Alexander. I, the priest of that hero, attest that great Cæsar has found that in which Roxana's soul now exists." And as he spoke he pressed his hand to his heart, bowing low before Cæsar; the rest imitated his example. Even Julius Paulinus, the satirist, followed the Roman priest's lead; but he whispered in the ear of Cassius Dio: "Alexander's soul was inquisitive, and wanted to see how it could live in the body which, of all mortal tenements on earth, least resembles his own."

A mocking word was on the ex-consul's lips as to the amiable frame of mind which had so suddenly come over Cæsar; but he preferred to watch and listen, as Caracalla beckoned Theocritus to him and

begged him to give up the appointment of Zminis, though, as a rule, he indulged the favorite's every whim. He could not bear, he said, to intrust the defense of his own person and of the city of Alexander to an Egyptian, so long as a Greek could be found capable of the duty. He proposed presently to have the two candidates brought before him, and to decide between them in the presence of the prefect of the prætorians. Then, turning to those of his captains who stood around him, he said :

"Greet my soldiers from me. I could not show myself to them yesterday. I saw just now, with deep regret, how the rain has drenched them in this luxurious city. I will no longer endure it. The prætorians and the Macedonian legion shall be housed in quarters of which they will tell wonders for a long time to come. I would rather see them sleeping in white wool and eating off silver than these vile traders. Tell them that."

He was here interrupted, for Epagathos announced a deputation from the Museum, and, at the same time, the painter Alexander, who had been brought from prison. At this Caracalla exclaimed with disgust :

"Spare me the hair-splitting logicians!—Do you, Philostratus, receive them in my name. If they make any impudent demands, you may tell them my opinion of them and their Museum. Go, but come back quickly. Bring in the painter. I will speak with him alone.—You, my friends, withdraw with our idiologos, the priest of Alexander, who is well known here, and visit the city. I shall not require you at present."

The whole troop hastened to obey. Caracalla now turned to Melissa once more, and his eye brightened as he again discerned the dimple in her cheeks,

which had recovered their roses. Her imploring eyes met his, and the happy expectation of seeing her brother lent them a light which brought joy to the friendless sovereign. During his last speech he had looked at her from time to time; but in the presence of so many strangers she had avoided meeting his gaze. Now she thought that she might freely show him that his favor was a happiness to her. Her soul, as Roxana, must of course feel drawn to his; in that he firmly believed. Her prayer and sacrifice for him sufficiently proved it—as he told himself once more.

When Alexander was brought in, it did not anger him to see that the brother, who held out his arms to Melissa in his habitual eager way, had to be reminded by her of the imperial presence. Every homage was due to this fair being, and he was, besides, much struck by Alexander's splendid appearance. It was long since any youthful figure had so vividly reminded him of the marble statues of the great Athenian masters. Melissa's brother stood before him, the very embodiment of the ideal of Greek strength and manly beauty. His mantle had been taken from him in prison, and he wore only the short chiton, which also left bare his powerful but softly modeled arms. He had been allowed no time to arrange and anoint his hair, and the light-brown curls were tossed in disorderly abundance about his shapely head. This favorite of the gods appeared in Cæsar's eyes as an Olympic victor, who had come to claim the wreath with all the traces of the struggle upon him.

No sign of fear, either of Cæsar or his lion, marred this impression. His bow, as he approached the potentate, was neither abject nor awkward, and Cæsar felt bitter wrath at the thought that this

splendid youth, of all men, should have selected him as the butt of his irony. He would have regarded it as a peculiar gift of fortune if this man—such a brother of such a sister—could but love him, and, with the eye of an artist, discern in the despot the great qualities which, in spite of his many crimes, he believed he could detect in himself. And he hoped, with an admixture of anxiety such as he had never known before, that the painter's demeanor would be such as should allow him to show mercy.

When Alexander besought him with a trustful mien to consider his youth, and the Alexandrian manners which he had inherited both from his parents and his grandparents, if indeed his tongue had wagged too boldly in speaking of the all-powerful Cæsar, and to remember the fable of the lion and the mouse, the scowl he had put on to impress the youth with his awfulness and power vanished from Cæsar's brow. The idea that this great artist, whose sharp eye could so surely distinguish the hideous from the beautiful, should regard him as ill-favored, was odious to him. He had listened to him in silence; but suddenly he inquired of Alexander whether it was indeed he, whom he had never injured, who had written the horrible epigram nailed with the rope to the door of the Serapeum; and when the painter emphatically denied it, Cæsar breathed as though a burden had fallen from his soul. He nevertheless insisted on hearing from the youth's own lips what it was that he had actually dared to say. After some hesitation, during which Melissa besought Cæsar in vain to spare her and her brother this confession, Alexander exclaimed:

"Then the hunted creature must walk into the net, and, unless your clemency interferes, on to

death! What I said referred partly to the wonderful strength that you, my lord, have so often displayed in the field and in the circus; and also to another thing, which I myself now truly repent of having alluded to. It is said that my lord killed his brother."

"That—ah! that was it!" said Cæsar, and his face, involuntarily this time, grew dark.

"Yes, my lord," Alexander went on, breathing hard. "To deny it would be to add a second crime to the former one, and I am one of those who would rather jump into cold water both feet at once, when it has to be done. All the world knows what your strength is; and I said that it was greater than that of Father Zeus; for that he had cast his son Hephæstos only on the earth, and your strong fist had cast your brother through the earth into the depths of Hades. That was all. I have not added nor concealed anything."

Melissa had listened in terror to this bold confession. Papinian, the brave prætorian prefect, one of the most learned lawyers of his time, had incurred Caracalla's fury by refusing to say that the murder of Geta was not without excuse; and his noble answer, that it was easier to commit fratricide than to defend it, cost him his life.

So long as Cæsar had been kind to her, Melissa had felt repelled by him; but now, when he was angry, she was once more attracted to him.

As the wounds of a murdered man are said to bleed afresh when the murderer approaches, Caracalla's irritable soul was wont to break out in a frenzy of rage when any one was so rash as to allude to this, his foulest crime. This reference to his brother's death had as usual stirred his wrath, but he controlled it; for as a torrent of rain extin-

guishes the fire which a lightning-flash has kindled, the homage to his strength, in Alexander's satire, had modified his indignation. The irony which made the artist's contemptuous words truly witty, would not have escaped Caracalla's notice if they had applied to any one else; but he either did not feel it, or would not remark it, for the sake of leaving Melissa in the belief that his physical strength was really wonderful. Besides, he thus could indulge his wish to avoid pronouncing sentence of death on this youth; he only measured him with a severe eye, and said in threatening tones, to repay mockery in kind and to remind the criminal of the fate imperial clemency should spare him:

"I might be tempted to try my strength on you, but that it is worse to try a fall with a vaporing wag, the sport of the winds, than with the son of Cæsar. And if I do not condescend to the struggle, it is because you are too light for such an arm as this." And as he spoke he boastfully grasped the muscles which constant practice had made thick and firm. "But my hand reaches far. Every man-at-arms is one of its fingers, and there are thousands of them. You have made acquaintance already, I fancy, with those which clutched you."

"Not so," replied Alexander, with a faint smile, as he bowed humbly. "I should not dare resist your great strength, but the watch-dogs of the law tried in vain to track me. I gave myself up."

"Of your own accord?"

"To procure my father's release, as he had been put in prison."

"Most magnanimous!" said Cæsar, ironically. "Such a deed sounds well, but is apt to cost a man his life. You seem to have overlooked that."

"No, great Cæsar; I expected to die."



"Then you are a philosopher, a contemner of life."

"Neither. I value life above all else; for, if it is taken from me, there is an end of enjoying its best gifts."

"Best gifts!" echoed Cæsar. "I should like to know which you honor with the epithet."

"Love and art."

"Indeed?" said Caracalla, with a swift glance at Melissa. Then, in an altered voice, he added, "And revenge?"

"That," said the artist, boldly, "is a pleasure I have not yet tasted. No one ever did me a real injury till the villain Zminis robbed my guiltless father of his liberty; and he is not worthy to do such mischief, as a finger of your imperial hand."

At this, Cæsar looked at him suspiciously, and said in stern tones:

"But you have now the opportunity of trying the fine flavor of vengeance. If I were timid—since the Egyptian acted only as my instrument—I should have cause to protect myself against you."

"By no means," said the painter, with an engaging smile, "it lies in your power to do me the greatest benefit. Do it, Cæsar! It would be a joy to me to show that, though I have been reckless beyond measure, I am nevertheless a grateful man."

"Grateful?" repeated Caracalla, with a cruel laugh. Then he rose slowly, and looked keenly at Alexander, exclaiming:

"I should almost like to try you."

"And I will answer for it that you will never regret it!" Melissa put in. "Greatly as he has erred, he is worthy of your clemency."

"Is he?" said Cæsar, looking down at her kind-

ly. "What Roxana's soul affirms by those rosy lips I can not but believe."

Then again he paused, studying Alexander with a searching eye, and added :

"You think me strong ; but you will change that opinion—which I value—if I forgive you like a poor-spirited girl. You are in my power. You risked your life. If I give it you, I must have a gift in return, that I may not be cheated."

"Set my father free, and he will do whatever you may require of him," Melissa broke out. But Caracalla stopped her, saying : "No one makes conditions with Cæsar. Stand back, girl."

Melissa hung her head and obeyed ; but she stood watching the eager discussion between these two dissimilar men, at first with anxiety and then with surprise.

Alexander seemed to resist Cæsar's demands ; but presently the despot must have proposed something which pleased the artist, for Melissa heard the low, musical laugh which had often cheered her in moments of sadness. Then the conversation was more serious, and Caracalla said, so loud that Melissa could hear him :

"Do not forget to whom you speak. If my word is not enough, you can go back to prison."

Then again she trembled for her brother ; but some soft word of his mollified the fury of the terrible man, who was never the same for two minutes together. The lion, too, which lay unchained by his master's seat, gave her a fright now and then ; for if Cæsar raised his voice in anger, he growled and stood up.

How fearful were this beast and his lord ! Rather would she spend her whole life on a ship's deck, tossed to and fro by the surges, than share

this man's fate. And yet there was in him something which attracted her; nay, and it nettled her that he should forget her presence.

At last Alexander humbly asked Caracalla whether he might not tell Melissa to what he had pledged his word.

"That shall be my business," replied Cæsar. "You think that a mere girl is a better witness than none at all. Perhaps you are right. Then let it be understood: whatever you may have to report to me, my wrath shall not turn against you. This fellow—why should you not be told, child?—is going into the town to collect all the jests and witty epigrams which have been uttered in my honor."

"Alexander!" cried Melissa, clasping her hands and turning pale with horror. But Caracalla laughed to himself, and went on cheerfully:

"Yes, it is dangerous work, no doubt; and for that reason I pledged my word as Cæsar not to require him to pay for the sins of others. On the contrary, he is free, if the posy he culls for me is sufficient."

"Ay," said Alexander, on whom his sister's white face and warning looks were having effect. "But you made me another promise on which I lay great stress. You will not compel me to tell you, nor try to discover through any other man, who may have spoken or written any particular satire."

"Enough!" said Caracalla, impatiently; but Alexander was not to be checked. He went on vehemently: "I have not forgotten that you said conditions were not to be made with Cæsar; but, in spite of my impotence, I maintain the right of returning to my prison and there awaiting my doom, unless you once more assure me, in this girl's presence, that you will neither inquire as to the names of the

authors of any gibes I may happen to have heard, nor compel me by any means whatever to give up the names of the writers of epigrams. Why should I not satisfy your curiosity and your relish of a sharp jest? But rather than do the smallest thing which might savor of treachery—ten times rather the axe or the gallows!”

And Caracalla replied with a dark frown, loudly and briefly:

“I promise.”

“And if your rage is too much for you?” wailed Melissa, raising her hands in entreaty; but the despot replied, sternly:

“There is no passion which can betray Cæsar into perjury.”

At this moment Philostratus came in again, with Epagathos, who announced the prætorian prefect. Melissa, encouraged by the presence of her kind protector, went on:

“But, great Cæsar, you will release my father and my other brother?”

“Perhaps,” replied Caracalla. “First we will see how this one carries out his task.”

“You will be satisfied, my lord,” said the young man, looking quite happy again, for he was delighted at the prospect of saying audacious things to the face of the tyrant whom all were bent on flattering, and holding up the mirror to him without, as he firmly believed, bringing any danger on himself or others.

He bowed to go. Melissa did the same, saying, as airily as though she were free to come and go here:

“Accept my thanks, great Cæsar. Oh, how fervently will I pray for you all my life, if only you show mercy to my father and brothers!”

1

"That means that you are leaving me?" asked Caracalla.

"How can it be otherwise?" said Melissa, timidly. "I am but a girl, and the men whom you expect—"

"But when they are gone?" Cæsar insisted.

"Even then you can not want me," she murmured.

"You mean," said Caracalla, bitterly, "that you are afraid to come back. You mean that you would rather keep out of the way of the man you prayed for, so long as he is well. And if the pain which first aroused your sympathy attacks him again, even then will you leave the irascible sovereign to himself or the care of the gods?"

"Not so, not so," said Melissa, humbly, looking into his eyes with an expression that pierced him to the heart, so that he added, with gentle entreaty:

"Then show that you are she whom I believe you to be. I do not compel you. Go whither you will, stay away even if I send for you; but"—and here his brow clouded again—"why should I try to be merciful to her from whom I looked for sympathy and kindness, when she flees from me like the rest?"

"O my lord!" Melissa sighed distressfully.

"Go!" Cæsar went on. "I do not need you."

"No, no," the girl cried, in great trouble. "Call me, and I will come. Only shelter me from the others, and from their looks of scorn; only—O immortal gods!—If you need me, I will serve you, and willingly, with all my heart. But if you really care for me, if you desire my presence, why let me suffer the worst?" Here a sudden flood of tears choked her utterance. A smile of triumph passed over

Cæsar's features, and drawing Melissa's hands away from her tearful face, he said, kindly :

"Alexander's soul pines for Roxana's; that is what makes your presence so dear to me. Never shall you have cause to rue coming at my call. I swear it by the manes of my divine father—you, Philostratus, are witness."

The philosopher, who thought he knew Caracalla, gave a sigh of relief; and Alexander gladly reflected that the danger he had feared for his sister was averted. This craze about Roxana, of which Caracalla had just now spoken to him as a certain fact, he regarded as a monstrous illusion of this strange man's, which would, however, be a better safeguard for Melissa than pledges and oaths.

He clasped her hand, and said with cheerful confidence: "Only send for her when you are ill, my lord, as long as you remain here. I know from your own lips that there is no passion which can betray Cæsar into perjury. Will you permit her to come with me for the present?"

"No," said Caracalla, sharply, and he bade him go about the business he had in hand. Then, turning to Philostratus, he begged him to conduct Melissa to Euryale, the high-priest's noble wife, for she had been a kind and never-forgotten friend of his mother's.

The philosopher gladly escorted the young girl to the matron, who had long been anxiously awaiting her return.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE statue of Serapis, a figure of colossal size, carved by the master-hand of Bryaxis, out of ivory overlaid with gold, sat enthroned in the inner chamber of the great Temple of Serapis, with the kalathos crowning his bearded face, and the three-headed Cerberus at his feet, gazing down in supreme silence on the scene around. He did not lack for pious votaries and enthusiastic admirers, for, so long as Cæsar was his guest, the curtain was withdrawn which usually hid his majestic form from their eyes. But his most devoted worshipers thought that the god's noble, benevolent, grave countenance had a wrathful look ; for, though nothing had been altered in this, the finest pillared hall in the world ; though the beautiful pictures in relief on the walls and ceiling, the statues and altars of marble, bronze, and precious metals between the columns, and the costly mosaic-work of many colors which decked the floor in regular patterns, were the same as of yore, this splendid pavement was trodden to-day by thousands of feet which had no concern with the service of the god.

Before Cæsar's visit, solemn silence had ever reigned in this worthy home of the deity, fragrant with the scarcely visible fumes of kyphi ; and the worshipers gathered without a sound round the foot of his statue, and before the numerous altars and

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the smaller images of the divinities allied to him or the votive tablets recording the gifts and services instituted in honor of Serapis by pious kings or citizens. On feast-days, and during daily worship, the chant of priestly choirs might be heard, or the murmur of prayer; and the eye might watch the stolistes who crowned the statues with flowers and ribbons, as required by the ritual, or the processions of priests in their various rank. Carrying sacred relics and figures of the gods on trays or boats, with emblematic standards, scepters, and cymbals, they moved about the sacred precinct in prescribed order, and most of them fulfilled their duties with devotion and edification.

But Cæsar's presence seemed to have banished these solemn feelings. From morning till night the great temple swarmed with visitors, but their appearance and demeanor were more befitting the market-place or public bath than the sanctuary. It was now no more than the anteroom to Cæsar's audience-chamber, and thronged with Roman senators, legates, tribunes, and other men of rank, and the clients and "friends" of Cæsar, mingled with soldiers of inferior grades, scribes, freedmen, and slaves, who had followed in Caracalla's train. There were, too, many Alexandrians who expected to gain some benefit, promotion, or distinction through the emperor's favorites. Most of these kept close to his friends and intimates, to make what profit they could out of them. Some were corn and wine dealers, or armorers, who wished to obtain contracts for supplying the army; others were usurers, who had money to lend on the costly objects which warriors often acquired as booty; and here, as everywhere, bedizened and painted women were crowding round the free-handed strangers. There were



Magians, astrologers, and magicians by the dozen, who considered this sacred spot the most suitable place in which to offer their services to the Romans, always inquisitive for signs and charms. They knew how highly Egyptian magic was esteemed throughout the empire; though their arts were in fact prohibited, each outdid the other in urgency, and not less in a style of dress which should excite curiosity and expectancy.

Serapion held aloof. Excepting that he wore a beard and robe, his appearance even had nothing in common with them; and his talar was not like theirs, embroidered with hieroglyphics, tongues, and flames, but of plain white stuff, which gave him the aspect of a learned and priestly sage.

As Alexander, on his way through the temple to fulfill Cæsar's commission, went past the Magian, Castor, his supple accomplice, stole up behind a statue, and, when the artist disappeared in the crowd, whispered to his master:

"The rascally painter is at liberty!"

"Till further notice!" was the reply, and Serapion was about to give his satellite some instructions, when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and Zminis said in a low voice:

"I am glad to have found you here. Accusations are multiplying against you, my friend; and though I have kept my eyes shut till now, that cannot last much longer."

"Let us hope you are mistaken," replied the Magian, firmly. And then he went on in a hurried whisper: "I know what your ambition is, and my support may be of use to you. But we must not be seen together. We will meet again in the instrument-room, to the left of the first stairs up to the observatory. You will find me there."

"At once, then," said the other. "I am to be in Cæsar's presence in a quarter of an hour."

The Magian, as being one of the most skillful makers of astronomical instruments, and attached to the sanctuary, had a key of the room he had designated. Zminis found him there, and their business was quickly settled. They knew each other well, and each knew things of the other which inspired them with mutual fear. However, as time pressed, they set aside all useless antagonisms, to unite against the common foe.

The Magian knew already that Zminis had been named to Cæsar as a possible successor to the chief of the night-watch, and that he had a powerful rival. By the help of the Syrian, whose ventriloquism was so perfect that he never failed to produce the illusion that his feigned voice proceeded from any desired person or thing, Serapion had enmeshed the prætorian prefect, the greatest magnate in the empire next to Cæsar himself, and in the course of the past night had gained a firm hold over him.

Macrinus, a man of humble birth, who owed his promotion to Severus, the father of Caracalla, had, the day before, been praying in the Pantheon to the statue of his deceased patron. A voice had proceeded from the image, telling him that the divine Severus needed him for a great work. A pious seer was charged to tell him more exactly what this was; and he would meet him if he went at about sunset to the shrine of Isis, and called three times on the name of Severus before the altar of the goddess.

The Syrian ventriloquist had, by Serapion's orders, hidden behind a pillar and spoken to the prefect from the statue; and Macrinus had, of course, obeyed his instructions. He had met the

Magian in the Temple of Isis, and what he had seen, heard, and felt during the night had so deeply affected him that he had promised to revisit Serapion the next evening. What means he had used to enslave so powerful a man the Magian did not tell his ally; but he declared that Macrinus was as wax in his hands, and he came to an agreement with the Egyptian that if he, Serapion, should bring about the promotion for which Zminis sighed, Zminis, on his part, should give him a free hand, and commend his arts to Cæsar.

It needed but a few minutes to conclude this compact; but then the Magian proceeded to insist that Alexander's father and brother should be made away with.

"Impossible," replied Zminis. "I should be only too glad to wring the necks of the whole brood; but, as it is, I am represented to Cæsar as too stern and ruthless. And a pretty little slut, old Heron's daughter, has entangled him in her toils."

"No," said Serapion, positively. "I have seen the girl, and she is as innocent as a child. But I know the force of contrast: when depravity meets purity—"

"Come, no philosophizing!" interrupted the other. "We have better things to attend to, and one or the other may turn to your advantage."

And he told him that Cæsar, whose whim it was to spare Alexander's life, regarded Melissa as an incarnation of Roxana.

"That is worth considering," said the Magian, stroking his beard meditatively; then he suddenly exclaimed:

"By the law, as you know, all the relatives of a state criminal are sent to the quarries or the mines. Dispatch Heron and his philosopher son forthwith.

Whither?—that is your concern; only, for the next few days they must be out of reach.”

“Good!” said the Egyptian, and an odious smile overspread his thin brown face. “They may go as galley-slaves and row themselves to the Sardinian mines. A good idea!”

“I have even better ideas than that to serve a friend,” replied Serapion. “Only get the philosopher out of the way. If Cæsar lends an ear to his ready tongue, I shall never see you guardian of the peace. The painter is less dangerous.”

“He shall share their fate,” cried the spy, and he licked his thick lips as if tasting some dainty morsel. He waved an adieu to the Magian, and hastened back to the great hall. There he strictly instructed one of his subordinates to take care that the gem-cutter and his son Philip found places on board a galley bound for Sardinia.

At the great door he again met Serapion, with the Syrian at his heels, and the Magian said:

“My friend here has just seen a clay figure, molded by some practiced hand. It represents Cæsar as a defiant warrior, but in the shape of a deformed dwarf. It is hideously like him; you can see it at the Elephant tavern.”

The Egyptian pressed his hand, with an eager “That will serve,” and hastily went out.

Two hours slipped by, and Zminis was still waiting in Cæsar’s anteroom. The Greek, Aristides, shared his fate, the captain hitherto of the armed guard; while Zminis had been the head of the spies, intrusted with communicating written reports to the chief of the night-watch. The Greek’s noble, soldierly figure looked strikingly fine by the slovenly, lank frame of the tall Egyptian. They both

knew that within an hour or so one would be supreme over the other ; but of this they thought it best to say nothing. Zminis, as was his custom when he wished to assume an appearance of respect which he did not feel, was alternately abject and pressingly confidential ; while Aristides calmly accepted his hypocritical servility, and answered it with dignified condescension. Nor had they any lack of subjects, for their interests were the same, and they both had the satisfaction of reflecting what injury must ensue to public safety through their long and useless detention here.

But when two full hours had elapsed without their being bidden to Cæsar's presence, or taken any notice of by their supporters, Zminis grew wroth, and the Greek frowned in displeasure. Meanwhile the anteroom was every moment more crowded, and neither chose to give vent to his anger. Still, when the door to the inner chambers was opened for a moment, and loud laughter and the ring of wine-cups fell on their ears, Aristides shrugged his shoulders, and the Egyptian's eyes showed an ominous white ring glaring out of his brown face.

Caracalla had meanwhile received the prætorian prefect ; he had forgiven him his long delay, when Macrinus, of his own accord, had told him of the wonderful things Serapion had made known to him. The prefect's son, too, had been invited to the banquet of Seleukus ; and when Caracalla heard from him and others of the splendor of the feast, he had begun to feel hungry. Even with regard to food, Cæsar acted only on the impulse of the moment ; and though, in the field, he would, to please his soldiers, be content with a morsel of bread and a little porridge, at home he highly appreciated the pleasures of the table. Whenever he gave the word, an abun-

dant meal must at once be ready. It was all the same to him what was kept waiting or postponed, so long as something to his taste was set before him. Macrinus, indeed, humbly reminded him that the guardians of the peace were awaiting him; but he only waved his hand with contempt, and proceeded to the dining-room, which was soon filled with a large number of guests. Within a few minutes the first dish was set before his couch, and, as plenty of good stories were told, and an admirable band of flute-playing and singing girls filled up the pauses in the conversation, he enjoyed his meal. In spite, too, of the warning which Galenus had impressed on his Roman physician, he drank freely of the fine wine which had been brought out for him from the airy lofts of the Serapeum, and those about him were surprised at their master's unwonted good spirits.

He was especially gracious to the high-priest, whom he bade to a place by his side; and he even accepted his arm as a support, when, the meal being over, they returned to the tablinum.

There he flung himself on a couch, with a burning head, and began feeding the lion, without paying any heed to his company. It was a pleasure to him to see the huge brute rend a young lamb. When the remains of this introductory morsel had been removed and the pavement washed, he gave the "Sword of Persia" pieces of raw flesh, teasing the beast by snatching the daintiest bits out of his mouth, and then offering them to him again, till the satiated brute stretched himself yawning at his feet. During this entertainment, he had a letter read to him from the senate, and dictated a reply to a secretary. His eyes twinkled with a tipsy leer in his flushed face, and yet he was perfectly competent;

and his instructions to the senate, though imperious indeed, were neither more nor less rational than in his soberest moods.

Then, after washing his hands in a golden basin, he acted on Macrinus's suggestion, and the two candidates who had so long been waiting were at last admitted. The prefect of the prætorians had, by the Magian's desire, recommended the Egyptian; but Cæsar wished to see for himself, and then to decide. Both the applicants had received hints from their supporters: the Egyptian, to moderate his rigor; the Greek, to express himself in the severest terms. And this was made easy for him, for the annoyance which had been pent up during his three hours' waiting was sufficient to lend his handsome face a stern look. Zminis strove to appear mild by assuming servile humility; but this so ill became his cunning features that Caracalla saw with secret satisfaction that he could accede to Melissa's wishes, and confirm the choice of the high-priest, in whose god he had placed his hopes.

Still, his own safety was more precious to him than the wishes of any living mortal; so he began by pouring out, on both, the vials of his wrath at the bad management of the town. Their blundering tools had not even succeeded in capturing the most guileless of men, the painter Alexander. The report that the men-at-arms had seized him had been a fabrication to deceive, for the artist had given himself up. Nor had he as yet heard of any other traitor whom they had succeeded in laying hands on, though the town was flooded with insolent epigrams directed against the imperial person. And, as he spoke, he glared with fury at the two candidates before him.

The Greek bowed his head in silence, as if con-

scious of his short-comings; the Egyptian's eyes flashed, and, with an amazingly low bend of his supple spine, he announced that, more than three hours since, he had discovered a most abominable caricature in clay, representing Cæsar as a soldier in a horrible pygmy form.

"And the perpetrator?" snarled Caracalla, listening with a scowl for the reply.

Zminis explained that great Cæsar himself had commanded his attendance just as he hoped to find the traces of the criminal, and that, while he was waiting, more than three precious hours had been lost. At this Caracalla broke out in a fury:

"Catch the villain! And let me see his insolent rubbish. Where are your eyes? You bungling louts ought to protect me against the foul brood that peoples this city, and their venomous jests. Past grievances are forgotten. Set the painter's father and brother at liberty. They have had a warning. Now I want something new. Something new, I say; and, above all, let me see the ringleaders in chains; the man who nailed up the rope, and the caricaturists. We must have them, to serve as an example to the others."

Aristides thought that the moment had now come for displaying his severity, and he respectfully but decidedly represented to Cæsar that he would advise that the gem-cutter and his son should be kept in custody. They were well-known persons, and too great clemency would only aggravate the virulence of audacious tongues. The painter was free, and if his relatives were also let out of prison, there was nothing to prevent their going off to the other end of the world. Alexandria was a seaport, and a ship would carry off the criminals before a man could turn round.



At this the emperor wrathfully asked him whether his opinion had been invited; and the cunning Egyptian said to himself that Caracalla was anxious to spare the father and his sons for the daughter's sake. And yet Cæsar would surely wish to keep them in safety, to have some hold over the girl; so he lied with a bold face, affirming that, in obedience to the law of the land, he had removed Heron and Philip, at any rate for the moment, beyond the reach of Cæsar's mercy. They had in the course of the night been placed on board a galley and were now on the way to Sardinia. But a swift vessel should presently be sent to overtake it and bring them back.

And the informer was right, for Cæsar's countenance brightened. He did, indeed, blame the Egyptian's overhasty action; but he gave no orders for following up the galley.

Then, after reflecting for a short time, he said:

"I do not find in either of you what I require; but at a pinch we are fain to eat moldy bread, so I must need choose between you two. The one who first brings me that clay figure, and the man who modeled it, in chains and bonds, shall be appointed chief of the night-watch."

Meanwhile Alexander had entered the room. As soon as Caracalla saw him, he beckoned to him, and the artist informed him that he had made good use of his time and had much to communicate. Then he humbly inquired as to the clay figure of which Cæsar was speaking, and Caracalla referred him to Zminis. The Egyptian repeated what the Magian had told him.

Alexander listened calmly; but when Zminis ceased speaking, the artist took a deep breath, drew himself up, and pointing a contemptuous finger at

the spy, as if his presence poisoned the air, he said: "It is that fellow's fault, great Cæsar, if the citizens of my native town dare commit such crimes. He torments and persecutes them in your name. How many a felony has been committed here, merely to scoff at him and his creatures, and to keep them on the alert! We are a light-headed race. Like children, we love to do the forbidden thing, so long as it is no stain on our honor. But that wretch treats all laughter and the most innocent fun as a crime, or so interprets it that it seems so. From this malignant delight in the woes of others, and in the hope of rising higher in office, that wicked man has brought misery on hundreds. It has all been done in thy great name, O Cæsar! No man has raised you up more foes than this wretch, who undermines your security instead of protecting it."

Here Zminis, whose swarthy face had become of ashy paleness, broke out in a hoarse tone: "I will teach you, and the whole rabble of traitors at your back—"

But Cæsar wrathfully commanded him to be silent, and Alexander quietly went on: "You can threaten, and you will array all your slanderous arts against us; I know you. But here sits a sovereign who protects the innocent—and I and mine are innocent. He will set his heel on your head when he knows you—the curse of this city—for the adder that you are! He is deceiving you now in small things, great Cæsar, and later he will deceive you in greater ones. Listen now how he has lied to you. He says he discovered a caricature of your illustrious person in the guise of a soldier. Why, then, did he not bring it away from the place where it could only excite disaffection, and might even mislead those who should see it into the belief that

your noble person was that of a dwarf? The answer is self-evident. He left it to betray others into further mockery, to bring them to ruin."

Cæsar had listened with approval, and now sternly asked the Egyptian:

"Did you see the image?"

"In the Elephant tavern!" yelled the man.

But Alexander shook his head doubtfully, and begged permission to ask the Egyptian a question. This was granted, and the artist inquired whether the soldier stood alone.

"So far as I remember, yes," replied Zminis, almost beside himself.

"Then your memory is as false as your soul!" Alexander shouted in his face, "for there was another figure by the soldier's side. The clay, still wet, clung to the same board as the figure of the soldier, modeled by the same hand. No, no, my crafty fellow, you will not catch the workman; for, being warned, he is already on the high-seas."

"It is false!" shrieked Zminis.

"That remains to be proved," said Alexander, scornfully.—"Allow me now, great Cæsar, to show you the figures. They have been brought by my orders, and are in the anteroom—carefully covered up, of course, for the fewer the persons who see them the better.

Caracalla nodded his consent, and Alexander hurried away; the despot heaping abuse on Zminis, and demanding why he had not at once had the images removed. The Egyptian now confessed that he had only heard of the caricature from a friend, and declared that if he had seen it he should have destroyed it on the spot. Macrinus here tried to excuse the spy, by remarking that this zealous official had only tried to set his services in a favor-

able light. The falsehood could not be approved, but was excusable. But he had scarcely finished speaking, when his opponent, the prætor, Lucius Priscillianus, observed, with a gravity he but rarely displayed :

"I should have thought that it was the first duty of the man who ought to be Cæsar's mainstay and representative here, to let his sovereign hear nothing but the undistorted truth. Nothing, it seems to me, can be less excusable than a lie told to divine Cæsar's face!"

A few courtiers, who were out of the prefect's favor, as well as the high-priest of Serapis, agreed with the speaker. Caracalla, however, paid no heed to them, but sat with his eyes fixed on the door, deeply wounded in his vanity by the mere existence of such a caricature.

He had not long to wait. But when the wrapper was taken off the clay figures, he uttered a low snarl, and his flushed face turned pale. Sounds of indignation broke from the bystanders; the blood rose to his cheeks again, and, shaking his fist, he muttered unintelligible threats, while his eyes wandered again and again to the caricatures. They attracted his attention more than all else, and as in an April day the sky is alternately dark and bright, so red and white alternated in his face. Then, while Alexander replied to a few questions, and assured him that the host of the "Elephant" had been very angry, and had gladly handed them over to him to be destroyed, Caracalla seemed to become accustomed to them, for he gazed at them more calmly, and tried to affect indifference. He inquired of Philostratus, as though he wished to be informed, whether he did not think that the artist who had modeled these figures must be a very clever fellow; and

when the philosopher assented conditionally, he declared that he saw some resemblance to himself in the features of the apple-dealer. And then he pointed to his own straight legs, only slightly disfigured by an injury to the ankle, to show how shamefully unfair it was to compare them with the lower limbs of a misshapen dwarf. Finally, the figure of the apple-dealer—a hideous pygmy form, with the head of an old man, like enough to his own—roused his curiosity. What was the point of this image? What peculiarity was it intended to satirize? The basket which hung about the neck of the figure was full of fruit, and the object he held in his hand might be an apple, or might be anything else.

With eager and constrained cheerfulness, he inquired the opinion of his "friends," treating as sheer flattery a suggestion from his favorite, Theocritus, that this was not an apple-dealer, but a human figure, who, though but a dwarf in comparison with the gods, nevertheless endowed the world with the gifts of the immortals.

Alexander and Philostratus could offer no explanation; but when the proconsul, Julius Paulinus, observed that the figure was offering the apples for money, as Cæsar offered the Roman citizenship to the provincials, he knew for what, Caracalla nodded agreement.

He then provisionally appointed Aristides to the coveted office. The Egyptian should be informed as to his fate. When the prefect was about to remove the figures, Cæsar hastily forbade it, and ordered the bystanders to withdraw. Alexander alone was commanded to remain. As soon as they were together, Cæsar sprang up and vehemently demanded to know what news he had brought. But the

young man hesitated to begin his report. Caracalla, of his own accord, pledged his word once more to keep his oath, and then Alexander assured him that he knew no more than Cæsar who were the authors of the epigrams which he had picked up here and there; and, though the satire they contained was venomous in some cases, still he, the sovereign of the world, stood so high that he could laugh them to scorn, as Socrates had laughed when Aristophanes placed him on the stage.

Cæsar declared that he scorned these flies, but that their buzzing annoyed him.

Alexander rejoiced at this, and only expressed his regret that most of the epigrams he had collected turned on the death of Cæsar's brother Geta. He knew now that it was rash to condemn a deed which—

Here Cæsar interrupted him, for he could not long remain quiet, saying sternly:

"The deed was needful, not for me, but for the empire, which is dearer to me than father, mother, or a hundred brothers, and a thousand times dearer than men's opinions. Let me hear in what form the witty natives of this city express their disapproval."

This sounded so dignified and gracious that Alexander ventured to repeat a distich which he had heard at the public baths, whither he had first directed his steps. It did not, however, refer to the murder of Geta, but to the mantle-like garment to which Cæsar owed the nickname of Caracalla. It ran thus:

"Why should my lord Caracalla affect a garment so ample?  
'Tis that the deeds are many of evil he needs to conceal."

At this Cæsar laughed, saying: "Who is there that has nothing to conceal? The lines are not

amiss. Hand me your tablets ; if the others are no worse—”

“ But they are,” Alexander exclaimed, anxiously, “ and I only regret that I should be the instrument of your tormenting yourself—”

“ Tormenting ? ” echoed Cæsar, disdainfully. “ The verses amuse me, and I find them most edifying. That is all. Hand me the tablets.”

The command was so positive, that Alexander drew out the little diptych, with the remark that painters wrote badly, and that what he had noted down was only intended to aid his memory. The idea that Cæsar should hear a few home-truths through him had struck him as pleasant, but now the greatness of the risk was clear to him. He glanced at the scrawled characters, and it occurred to him that he had intended to change the word *dwarf* in one line to *Cæsar*, and to keep the third and most trenchant epigram from the emperor. The fourth and last was very innocent, and he had meant to read it last, to mollify him. So he did not wish to show the tablets. But, as he was about to take them back, Caracalla snatched them from his hand and read with some difficulty :

“ Fraternal love was once esteemed  
A virtue even in the great,  
And *Philadelphos* then was deemed  
A name to grace a potentate.  
But now the dwarf upon the throne,  
By murder of his mother's son,  
As *Misadelphos* must be known.”

“ Indeed ! ” murmured Cæsar, with a pale face, and then he went on in a low, sullen tone : “ Always the same story—my brother, and my small stature. In this town they follow the example of the barbarians, it would seem, who choose the tallest and

broadest of their race to be king. If the third epigram has nothing else in it, the shallow wit of your fellow-citizens is simply tedious.—Now, what have we next? Trochaics! Hardly anything new, I fear! —There is the water-jar. I will drink; fill the cup.”

But Alexander did not immediately obey the command so hastily given; assuring Cæsar that he could not possibly read the writing, he was about to take up the tablets. But Cæsar laid his hand on them, and said, imperiously: “Drink! Give me the cup.”

He fixed his eyes on the wax, and with difficulty deciphered the clumsy scrawl in which Alexander had noted down the following lines, which he had heard at the “Elephant”:

“Since on earth our days are numbered,  
Ask me not what deeds of horror  
Stain the hands of fell Tarautas.  
Ask me of his noble actions,  
And with one short word I answer,  
‘None!’—replying to your question  
With no waste of precious hours.”

Alexander meanwhile had done Caracalla’s bidding, and when he had replaced the jar on its stand and returned to Cæsar, he was horrified; for the emperor’s head and arms were shaking and struggling to and fro, and at his feet lay the two halves of the wax tablets which he had torn apart when the convulsion came on. He foamed at the mouth, with low moans, and, before Alexander could prevent him, racked with pain and seeking for some support, he had set his teeth in the arm of the seat off which he was slipping. Greatly shocked, and full of sincere pity, Alexander tried to raise him; but the lion, who perhaps suspected the artist of having been the cause of this sudden attack, rose on his feet



with a roar, and the young man would have had no chance of his life if the beast had not happily been chained down after his meal. With much presence of mind, Alexander sprang behind the chair and dragged it, with the unconscious man who served him as a shield, away from the angry brute.

Galen had urged Cæsar to avoid excess in wine and violent emotions, and the wisdom of the warning was sufficiently proved by the attack which had seized him with such fearful violence, just when Caracalla had neglected it in both particulars.

Alexander had to exert all the strength of his muscles, practised in the wrestling-school, to hold the sufferer on his seat, for his strength, which was not small, was doubled by the demons of epilepsy.

In an instant the whole Court had rushed to the spot on hearing the lion's roar of rage, which grew louder and louder, and could be heard at no small distance, and then Alexander's shout for help. But the private physician and Epagathos, the chamberlain, would allow no one to enter the room; only old Adventus, who was half blind, was permitted to assist them in succoring the sufferer. He had been raised by Caracalla from the humble office of letter-carrier to the highest dignities and the office of his private chamberlain; but the leech availed himself by preference of the assistance of this experienced and quiet man, and between them they soon brought Cæsar to his senses. Cæsar then lay pale and exhausted on a couch which had hastily been arranged, his eyes fixed on vacancy, scarcely able to move a finger. Alexander held his trembling hand, and when the physician, a stout man of middle age, took the artist's place and bade him retire, Caracalla, in a low voice, desired him to remain.

As soon as Cæsar's suspended faculties were

fully awake again, he turned to the cause of his attack. With a look of pain and entreaty he desired Alexander to give him the tablets once more; but the artist assured him—and Caracalla seemed not sorry to believe—that he had crushed the wax in his convulsion. The sick man himself no doubt felt that such food was too strong for him. After he had remained staring at nothing in silence for some time, he began again to speak of the gibes of the Alexandrians. Surrounded as he was by servile favorites, whose superior he was in gifts and intellect, what had here come under his notice seemed to interest him above measure.

He desired to know where and from whom the painter had got these epigrams. But again Alexander declared that he did not know the names of the authors; that he had found one at the public baths, the second in a tavern, and the third at a hair-dresser's shop. Cæsar looked sadly at the youth's abundant brown curls which had been freshly oiled, and said: "Hair is like the other good gifts of life. It remains fine only with the healthy. You, happy rascal, hardly know what sickness means!" Then again he sat staring in silence, till he suddenly started up and asked Alexander, as Philostratus had yesterday asked Melissa:

"Do you and your sister belong to the Christians?"

When he vehemently denied it, Caracalla went on: "And yet these epigrams show plainly enough how the Alexandrians feel toward me. Melissa, too, is a daughter of this town, and when I remember that she could bring herself to pray for me, then — My nurse, who was the best of women, was a Christian. I learned from her the doctrine of loving our enemies and praying for those who despitely

treat us. I always regarded it as impossible; but now—your sister— What I was saying just now about the hair and good health reminds me of another speech of the Crucified one which my nurse often repeated—how long ago!—‘To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.’ How cruel and yet how wise, how terribly striking and true! A healthy man! What more can he want, and what abundant gifts that best of all gifts will gain for him! If he is visited by infirmity—only look at me!—how much misery I have suffered from this curse, terrible enough in itself, and tainting everything with the bitterness of wormwood!”

He laughed softly but scornfully, and continued:

“But I! I am the sovereign of the universe. I have so much—oh yes, so much!—and for that reason more shall be given to me, and my wildest wishes shall be satisfied!”

“Yes, my liege!” interrupted Alexander, eagerly.  
“After pain comes pleasure!—

‘Live, love, drink, and rejoice,  
And wreath thyself with me!’

sings Sappho, and it is not a bad plan to follow Anakreon’s advice, even at the present day. Think of the short suffering which now and then embitters for you the sweet cup of life, as being the ring of Polykrates, with which you appease the envy of the gods who have given you so much. In your place, eternal gods! how I would enjoy the happy hours of health, and show the immortals and mortals alike how much true and real pleasure power and riches can procure!”

The emperor’s weary eyes brightened, and with the cry—

"So will I! I am still young, and I have the power!" he started suddenly to his feet. But he sank back again directly on the couch, shaking his head as if to say, "There, you see what a state I am in!" The fate of this unhappy man touched Alexander's heart even more deeply than before.

His youthful mind, which easily received fresh impressions, forgot the deeds of blood and shame which stained the soul of this pitiable wretch. His artistic mind was accustomed to apprehend what he saw with his whole soul and without secondary considerations, as if it stood there to be painted; and the man that lay before him was to him at that moment only a victim whom a cruel fate had defrauded of the greatest pleasures in life. He also remembered how shamelessly he and others had mocked at Cæsar. Perhaps Caracalla had really spilled most of the blood to serve the welfare and unity of the empire.

He, Alexander, was not his judge.

If Glaukias had seen the object of his derision lying thus, it certainly would never have occurred to him to represent him as a pygmy monster. No, no! Alexander's artistic eye knew the difference well between the beautiful and the ugly—and the exhausted man lying on the divan, was no hideous dwarf. A dreamy languor spread over his nobly chiselled features. An expression of pain but rarely passed over them, and Cæsar's whole appearance reminded the painter of the fine Ephesian gladiator Kallistos as he lay on the sand, severely wounded after his last fight, awaiting the death-stroke. He would have liked to hasten home and fetch his materials to paint the likeness of the misjudged man, and to show it to the scoffers.

He stood silent, absorbed in studying the quiet

face so finely formed by Nature and so pathetic to look at. No thoroughly depraved miscreant could look like that. Yet it was like a peaceful sea: when the hurricane should break loose, what a boiling whirl of gray, hissing, tossing, foaming waves would disfigure the peaceful, smooth, glittering surface!

And suddenly the emperor's features began to show signs of animation. His eye, but now so dull, shone more brightly, and he cried out, as if the long silence had scarcely broken the thread of his ideas, but in a still husky voice:

"I should like to get up and go with you, but I am still too weak. Do you go now, my friend, and bring me back fresh news."

Alexander then begged him to consider how dangerous every excitement would be for him; yet Caracalla exclaimed, eagerly:

"It will strengthen me and do me good! Everything that surrounds me is so hollow, so insipid, so contemptible—what I hear is so small. A strong, highly spiced word, even if it is sharp, refreshes me— When you have finished a picture, do you like to hear nothing but how well your friends can flatter?"

The artist thought he understood Cæsar. True to his nature, always hoping for the best, he thought that, as the severe judgment of the envious had often done him (Alexander) good, so the sharp satire of the Alexandrians would lead Caracalla to introspection and greater moderation; he only resolved to tell the sufferer nothing further that was merely insulting.

When he bade him farewell, Caracalla glanced up at him with such a look of pain that the artist longed to give him his hand, and speak to him with real affection. The tormenting headache which fol-

lowed each convulsion had again come on, and Cæsar submitted without resistance to what the physician prescribed.

Alexander asked old Adventus at the door if he did not think that the terrible attack had been brought on by annoyance at the Alexandrians' satire, and if it would not be advisable in the future not to allow such things to reach the emperor's ear; but the man, looking at him in surprise with his half-blind eyes, replied with a brutal want of sympathy that disgusted the youth:

"Drinking brought on the attack. What makes him ill are stronger things than words. If you yourself, young man, do not suffer for Alexandrian wit, it will certainly not hurt Cæsar!"

Alexander turned his back indignantly on the chamberlain, and he became so absorbed in wondering how it was possible that the emperor, who was cultivated and appreciated what was beautiful, could have dragged out of the dust and kept near him two such miserable creatures as Theocritus and this old man, that Philostratus, who met him in the next room, had almost to shout at him.

Philostratus informed him that Melissa was staying with the chief priest's wife; but just as he was about to inquire curiously what had passed between the audacious painter and Cæsar—for even Philostratus was a courtier—he was called away to Caracalla.

## CHAPTER XIX.

IN one of the few rooms of his vast palace which the chief priest had reserved for the accommodation of the members of his own household, the youth was received by Melissa, Timotheus's wife Euryale, and the lady Berenike.

This lady was pleased to see the artist again to whom she was indebted for the portrait of her daughter. She had it now in her possession once more, for Philostratus had had it taken back to her house while the emperor was at his meal.

She rested on a sofa, quite worn out. She had passed through hours of torment; for her concern about Melissa, who had become very dear to her, had given her much more anxiety than even the loss of her beloved picture. Besides, the young girl was to her for the moment the representative of her sex, and the danger of seeing this pure, sweet creature exposed to the will of a licentious tyrant drove her out of her senses, and her lively fancy had resulted in violent outbreaks of indignation. She now proposed all sorts of schemes, of which Euryale, the more prudent but not less warm-hearted wife of the chief priest, demonstrated the impossibility.

Like Berenike, a tender-hearted woman, whose smooth, brown hair had already begun to turn gray, she had also lost her only child. But years had passed since then, and she had accustomed herself

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to seek comfort in the care of the sick and wretched. She was regarded all over the city as the providence of all in need, whatever their condition and faith. Where charity was to be bestowed on a large scale—if hospitals or almshouses were to be erected or endowed—she was appealed to first, and if she promised her quiet but valuable assistance, the result was at once secured. For, besides her own and her husband's great riches, this lady of high position, who was honored by all, had the purses of all the heathens and Christians in the city at her disposal; both alike considered that she belonged to them; and the latter, although she only held with them in secret, had the better right.

At home, the society of distinguished men afforded her the greatest pleasure. Her husband allowed her complete freedom; although he, as the chief Greek priest of the city, would have preferred that she should not also have had among her most constant visitors so many learned Christians. But the god whom he served united in his own person most of the others; and the mysteries which he superintended taught that even Serapis was only a symbolical embodiment of the universal soul, fulfilling its eternal existence by perpetually re-creating itself under constant and immutable laws. A portion of that soul, which dwelt in all created things, had its abode in each human being, to return to the divine source after death. Timotheus firmly clung to this pantheist creed; still, he held the honorable post of head of the Museum—in the place of the Roman priest of Alexander, a man of less learning—and was familiar not only with the tenets of his heathen predecessors, but with the sacred scriptures of the Jews and Christians; and in the ethics of these last he found much which met his views.



He, who, at the Museum, was counted among the skeptics, liked biblical sentences, such as "All is vanity," and "We know but in part." The command to love your neighbor, to seek peace, to thirst after truth, the injunction to judge the tree by its fruit, and to fear more for the soul than the body, were quite to his mind.

He was so rich that the gifts of the visitors to the temple, which his predecessors had insisted on, were of no importance to him. Thus he mingled a great deal that was Christian with the faith of which he was chief minister and guardian. Only the conviction with which men like Clemens and Origen, who were friends of his wife, declared that the doctrine to which they adhered was the only right one—was, in fact, the truth itself—seemed to the skeptic "foolishness."

His wife's friends had converted his brother Zeno to Christianity; but he had no need to fear lest Euryale should follow them. She loved him too much, and was too quiet and sensible, to be baptized, and thus expose him, the heathen high-priest, to the danger of being deprived of the power which she knew to be necessary to his happiness.

Every Alexandrian was free to belong to any other than the heathen creeds, and no one had taken offence at his skeptical writings. When Euryale acted like the best of the Christian women, he could not take it amiss; and he would have scorned to blame her preference for the teaching of the crucified God.

As to Cæsar's character he had not yet made up his mind.

He had expected to find him a half-crazy villain, and his rage after he had heard the epigram against himself, left with the rope, had strengthened the

chief priest's opinion. But since then he had heard of much that was good in him; and Timotheus felt sure that his judgment was unbiased by the high esteem Cæsar showed to him, while he treated others like slaves. His improved opinion had been raised by the intercourse he had held with Cæsar. The much-abused man had on these occasions shown that he was not only well educated but also thoughtful; and yesterday evening, before Caracalla had gone to rest exhausted, the high-priest, with his wise experience, had received exactly the same impressions as the easily influenced artist; for Cæsar had bewailed his sad fate in pathetic terms, and confessed himself indeed deeply guilty, but declared that he had intended to act for the best, had sacrificed fortune, peace of mind, and comfort to the welfare of the state. His keen eye had marked the evils of the time, and he had acknowledged that his efforts to extirpate the old maladies in order to make room for better things had been a failure, and that, instead of earning thanks, he had drawn down on himself the hatred of millions.

It was for this reason that Timotheus, on rejoining his household, had assured them that, as he thought over this interview, he expected something good—yes, perhaps the best—from the young criminal in the purple.

But the lady Berenike had declared with scornful decision that Caracalla had deceived her brother-in-law; and when Alexander likewise tried to say a word for the sufferer, she got into a rage and accused him of foolish credulity.

Melissa, who had already spoken in favor of the emperor, agreed, in spite of the matron, with her brother. Yes, Caracalla had sinned greatly, and his conviction that Alexander's soul lived in him and

Roxana's in her was foolish enough; but the marvelous likeness to her of the portrait on the gem would astonish any one. That good and noble impulses stirred his soul she was certain. But Berenike only shrugged her shoulders contemptuously; and when the chief priest remarked that yesterday evening Caracalla had in fact not been in a position to attend a feast, and that a portion, at least, of his other offenses might certainly be put down to the charge of his severe suffering, the lady exclaimed:

"And is it also his bodily condition that causes him to fill a house of mourning with festive uproar? I am indifferent as to what makes him a malefactor. For my part, I would sooner abandon this dear child to the care of a criminal than to that of a madman."

But the chief priest and the brother and sister both declared Cæsar's mind to be as sound and sharp as any one's; and Timotheus asked who, at the present time, was without superstition, and the desire of communicating with departed souls. Still the matron would not allow herself to be persuaded, and after the chief priest had been called away to the service of the god, Euryale reproved her sister-in-law for her too great zeal. When the wisdom of hoary old age and impetuous youth agree in one opinion, it is commonly the right one.

"And I maintain," cried Berenike—and her large eyes flamed angrily—"it is criminal to ignore my advice. Fate has robbed you as well as me of a dear child. I will not also lose this one, who is as precious to me as a daughter."

Melissa bent over the lady's hands and kissed them gratefully, exclaiming with tearful eyes, "But he has been very good to me, and has assured me—"

"Assured!" repeated Berenike disdainfully. She then drew the young girl impetuously toward her, kissed her on her forehead, placed her hands on her head as if to protect her, and turned to the artist as she continued:

"I stand by what I recommended before. This very night Melissa must get far away from here. You, Alexander, must accompany her. My own ship, the 'Berenike and Korinna'—Seleukus gave it to me and my daughter—is ready to start. My sister lives in Carthage. Her husband, the first man in the city, is my friend. You will find protection and shelter in their house."

"And how about our father and Philip?" interrupted Alexander. "If we follow your advice, it is certain death to them!"

The matron laughed scornfully.

"And that is what you expect from this good, this great and noble sovereign!"

"He proves himself full of favors to his friends," answered Alexander, "but woe betide those who offend him!"

Berenike looked thoughtfully at the ground, and added, more quietly:

"Then try first to release your people, and afterward embark on my ship. It shall be ready for you. Melissa will use it, I know.—My veil, child! The chariot waits for me at the Temple of Isis.—You will accompany me there, Alexander, and we will drive to the harbor. There I will introduce you to the captain. It will be wise. Your father and brother are dearer to you than your sister; she is more important to me. If only I could go away myself—away from here, from the desolate house, and take her with me!"

And she raised her arm, as if she would throw a stone into the distance.

She impetuously embraced the young girl, took leave of her sister-in-law, and left the room with Alexander.

Directly Euryale was alone with Melissa, she comforted the girl in her kind, composed manner; for the unhappy matron's gloomy presentiments had filled Melissa with fresh anxieties.

And what had she not gone through during the day!

Soon after her perilous interview with Caracalla, Timotheus, with the chief of the astrologers from the Serapeum, and the emperor's astronomer, had come to her, to ask her on what day and at what hour she was born. They also inquired concerning the birthdays of her parents, and other events of her life. Timotheus had informed her that the emperor had ordered them to cast her nativity.

Soon after dinner she had gone, accompanied by the lady Berenike, who had found her at the chief priest's house, to visit her lover in the sick-rooms of the Serapeum. Thankful and happy, she had found him with fully recovered consciousness, but the physician and the freedman Andreas, whom she met at the door of the chamber, had impressed on her the importance of avoiding all excitement. So it had not been possible for her to tell him what had happened to her people, or of the perilous step she had taken in order to save them. But Diodoros had talked of their wedding, and Andreas could confirm the fact that Polybius wished to see it celebrated as soon as possible.

Several pleasant subjects were discussed; but between whiles Melissa had to dissemble and give evasive answers to Diodoros's questions as to

whether she had already arranged with her brother and friends who should be the youths and maidens to form the wedding procession, and sing the hymeneal song.

As the two whispered to one another and looked tenderly at each other—for Diodoros had insisted on her allowing him to kiss not only her hands but also her sweet red lips—Berenike had pictured her dead daughter in Melissa's place. What a couple they would have been! How proudly and gladly she would have led them to the lovely villa at Kanopus, which her husband and she had rebuilt and decorated with the idea that some day Korinna, her husband, and—if the gods should grant it—their children, might inhabit it! But even Melissa and Diodoros made a fine couple, and she tried with all her heart not to grudge her all the happiness that she had wished for her own child.

When it was time to depart, she joined the hands of the betrothed pair, and called down a blessing from the gods.

Diodoros accepted this gratefully.

He only knew that this majestic lady had made Melissa's acquaintance through Alexander, and had won her affection, and he encouraged the impression that this woman, whose Juno-like beauty haunted him, had visited him on his bed of sickness in the place of his long-lost mother.

Outside the sick-room Andreas again met Melissa, and, after she had told him of her visit to the emperor, he impressed on her eagerly on no account to obey the tyrant's call again. Then he had promised to hide her securely, either on Zenno's estate or else in the house of another friend, which was difficult of access. When Dame Berenike had

again, and with particular eagerness, suggested her ship, Andreas had exclaimed:

"In the garden, on the ship, under the earth—only not back to Cæsar!"

The last question of the freedman's, as to whether she had meditated further on his discourse, had reminded her of the sentence, "The fullness of the time is come"; and afterward the thought occurred to her, again and again, that in the course of the next few hours some decisive event would happen to her, "fulfilling the time," as Andreas expressed it.

When, therefore, somewhat later, she was alone with the chief priest's wife, who had concluded her comforting, pious exhortations, Melissa asked the lady Euryale whether she had ever heard the sentence, "When the fullness of the time is come."

At this the lady cried, gazing at the girl with surprised inquiry:

"Are you, then, after all, connected with the Christians?"

"Certainly not," answered the young girl, firmly. "I heard it accidentally, and Andreas, Polybius's freedman, explained it to me."

"A good interpreter," replied the elder lady. "I am only an ignorant woman; yet, child, even I have experienced that a day, an hour, comes to every man in the course of his life in which he afterward sees that the time was fulfilled. As the drops become mingled with the stream, so at that moment the things we have done and thought unite to carry us on a new current, either to salvation or perdition. Any moment may bring the crisis; for that reason the Christians are right when they call on one another to watch. You also must keep your eyes open. When the time—who knows how soon?—is

fulfilled for you, it will determine the good or evil of your whole life."

"An inward voice tells me that also," answered Melissa, pressing her hands on her panting bosom. "Just feel how my heart beats!"

Euryale, smiling, complied with this wish, and as she did so she shuddered. How pure and lovable was this young creature; and Melissa looked to her like a lamb that stood ready to hasten trustfully to meet the wolf!

At last she led her guest into the room where supper was prepared.

The master of the house would not be able to share it, and while the two women sat opposite one another, saying little, and scarcely touching either food or drink, Philostratus was announced.

He came as messenger from Caracalla, who wished to speak to Melissa.

"At this hour? Never, never! It is impossible!" exclaimed Euryale, who was usually so calm; but Philostratus declared, nevertheless, that denial was useless. The emperor was suffering particularly severely, and begged to remind Melissa of her promise to serve him gladly if he required her. Her presence, he assured Euryale, would do the sick man good, and he guaranteed that, so long as Cæsar was tormented by this unbearable pain, the young woman had nothing to fear.

Melissa, who had risen from her seat when the philosopher had entered, exclaimed:

"I am not afraid, and will go with you gladly—"

"Quite right, child," answered Philostratus, affectionately. Euryale, however, found it difficult to keep back her tears while she stroked the girl's hair and arranged the folds of her garment. When at last she said good-by to Melissa and was embrac-



ing her, she was reminded of the farewell she had taken, many years ago, of a Christian friend before she was led away by the lictors to martyrdom in the circus. Finally, she whispered something in the philosopher's ear, and received from him the promise to return with Melissa as soon as possible.

Philostratus was, in fact, quite easy. Just before, Caracalla's helpless glance had met his sympathizing gaze, and the suffering Cæsar had said nothing to him but—

“O Philostratus, I am in such pain!” and these words still rang in the ears of this warm-hearted man.

While he was endeavoring to comfort the emperor, Cæsar's eyes had fallen on the gem, and he asked to see it. He gazed at it attentively for some time, and when he returned it to the philosopher he had ordered him to fetch the prototype of Roxana.

Closely enveloped in the veil which Euryale had placed on her head, Melissa passed from room to room, keeping near to the philosopher.

Wherever she appeared she heard murmuring and whispering that troubled her, and tittering followed her from several of the rooms as she left them; even from the large hall where the emperor's friends awaited his orders in numbers, she heard a loud laugh that frightened and annoyed her.

She no longer felt as unconstrained as she had been that morning when she had come before Cæsar. She knew that she would have to be on her guard; that anything, even the worst, might be expected from him. But as Philostratus described to her, on the way, how terribly the unfortunate man suffered, her tender heart was again drawn to him, to whom—as she now felt—she was bound by

an indefinable tie. She, if any one, as she repeated to herself, was able to help him; and her desire to put the truth of this conviction to the proof—for she could only regard it as too amazing to be grounded in fact—was seconded by the less disinterested hope that, while attending on the sufferer, she might find an opportunity of effecting the release of her father and brother.

Philostratus went on to announce her arrival, and she, while waiting, tried to pray to the manes of her mother; but, before she could sufficiently collect her thoughts, the door opened. Philostratus silently beckoned to her, and she stepped into the tablinum, which was but dimly lighted by a few lamps.

Caracalla was still resting here; for every movement increased the pain that tormented him.

How quiet it was! She thought she could hear her own heart beating.

Philostratus remained standing by the door, but she went on tiptoe toward the couch, fearing her light footsteps might disturb the emperor. Yet before she had reached the divan she stopped still, and then she heard the plaintive rattle in the sufferer's throat, and from the background of the room the easy breathing of the burly physician and of old Adventus, both of whom had fallen asleep; and then a peculiar tapping. The lion beat the floor with his tail with pleasure at recognizing her.

This noise attracted the invalid's attention, and when he opened his closed eyes and saw Melissa, who was anxiously watching all his movements, he called to her lightly with his hand on his brow:

"The animal has a good memory, and greets you in my name. You were sure to come; I knew it!"

The young girl stepped nearer to him, and answered, kindly, "Since you needed me, I gladly followed Philostratus."

"Because I needed you?" asked the emperor.

"Yes," she replied, "because you require nursing."

"Then, to keep you, I shall wish to be ill often," he answered, quickly; but he added, sadly, "only not so dreadfully ill as I have been to-day."

One could hear how laborious talking was to him, and the few words he had sought and found, in order to say something kind to Melissa, had so hurt his shattered nerves and head that he sank back, gasping, on the cushions.

Then for some time all was quiet, until Caracalla took his hand from his forehead and continued, as if in excuse:

"No one seems to know what it is. And if I talk ever so softly, every word vibrates through my brain."

"Then you must not speak," interrupted Melissa, eagerly. "If you want anything, only make signs. I shall understand you without words, and the quieter it is here the better."

"No, no; you must speak," begged the invalid. "When the others talk, they make the beating in my head ten times worse, and excite me; but I like to hear your voice."

"The beating?" interrupted Melissa, in whom this word awoke old memories. "Perhaps you feel as if a hammer was hitting you over the left eye? If you move rapidly, does it not pierce your skull, and do you not feel as sick as if you were on the rocking sea?"

"Then you also know this torment?" asked Caracalla, surprised; but she answered, quietly,

that her mother had suffered several times from similar headaches, and had described them to her.

Cæsar sank back again on the pillows, moved his dry lips, and glanced toward the drink which Galen had prescribed for him; and Melissa, who almost as a child had long nursed a dear invalid, guessed what he wanted, brought him the goblet, and gave him a draught.

Caracalla rewarded her with a grateful look. But the physic only seemed to increase the pain. He lay there panting and motionless, until, trying to find a new position, he groaned, lightly:

"It is as if iron was being hammered here. One would think others might hear it."

At the same time he seized the girl's hand and placed it on his burning brow.

Melissa felt the pulse in the sufferer's temple throbbing hard and short against her fingers, as she had her mother's when she laid her cool hand on her aching forehead; and then, moved by the wish to comfort and heal, she let her right hand rest over the sick man's eyes. As soon as she felt one hand was hot, she put the other in its place; and it must have relieved the patient, for his moans ceased by degrees, and he finally said, gratefully:

"What good that does me! You are— I knew you would help me. It is already quite quiet in my brain. Once more your hand, dear girl!"

Melissa willingly obeyed him, and as he breathed more and more easily, she remembered that her mother's headache had often been relieved when she had placed her hand on her forehead. Cæsar, now opening his eyes wide, and looking her full in the face, asked why she had not allowed him sooner to reap the benefit of this remedy.

Melissa slowly withdrew her hand, and with drooping eyes answered gently :

"You are the emperor, a man. . . and I. . . ."

But Caracalla interrupted her eagerly, and with a clear voice :

"Not so, Melissa ! Do not you feel, like me, that something else draws us to one another, like what binds a man to his wife ?—There lies the gem. Look at it once again— No, child, no ! This resemblance is not mere accident. The short-sighted, might call it superstition or a vain illusion ; I know better. At least a portion of Alexander's soul lives in this breast. A hundred signs—I will tell you about it later—make it a certainty to me. And yesterday morning. . . . I see it all again before me. . . . You stood above me, on the left, at a window. . . . I looked up ; . . . our eyes met, and I felt in the depths of my heart a strange emotion. . . . I asked myself, silently, where I had seen that lovely face before. And the answer rang, you have already often met her ; you know her !"

"My face reminded you of the gem," interrupted Melissa, disquieted.

"No, no," continued Cæsar. "It was something else. Why had none of my many gems ever reminded me before of living people ? Why did your picture, I know not how often, recur to my mind ? And you ? Only recollect what you have done for me. How marvelously we were brought together ! And all this in the course of a single, short day. And you also. . . . I ask you, by all that is holy to you. . . . Did you, after you saw me in the court of sacrifice, not think of me so often and so vividly that it astonished you ?"

"You are Cæsar," answered Melissa, with increasing anxiety.

"So you thought of my purple robes?" asked Caracalla, and his face clouded over; "or perhaps only of my power that might be fatal to your family? I will know. Speak the truth, girl, by the head of your father!"

Then Melissa poured forth this confession from her oppressed heart:

"Yes, I could not help remembering you constantly, . . . and I never saw you in purple, but just as you had stood there on the steps; . . . and then—ah! I have told you already how sorry I was for your sufferings. I felt as if . . . but how can I describe it truly?—as if you stood much nearer to me than the ruler of the world could to a poor, humble girl. It was . . . eternal gods! . . ."

She stopped short; for she suddenly recollected anxiously that this confession might prove fatal to her. The sentence about the time which should be fulfilled for each was ringing in her ears, and it seemed to her that she heard for the second time the lady Berenike's warning.

But Caracalla allowed her no time to think; for he interrupted her, greatly pleased, with the cry:

"It is true, then! The immortals have wrought as great a miracle in you as in me. We both owe them thanks, and I will show them how grateful I can be by rich sacrifices. Our souls, which destiny had already once united, have met again. That portion of the universal soul which of yore dwelt in Roxana, and now in you, Melissa, has also vanquished the pain which has embittered my life. . . . You have proved it!—And now . . . it is beginning to throb again more violently—now—beloved and restored one, help me once more!"

Melissa perceived anxiously how the emperor's face had flushed again during this last vehement

speech, and at the same time the pain had again contracted his forehead and eyes. And she obeyed his command, but this time only in shy submission. When she found that he became quieter, and the movement of her hand once more did him good, she recovered her presence of mind. She remembered how often the quiet application of her hand had helped her mother to sleep.

She therefore explained to Caracalla, in a low whisper directly he began to speak again, that her desire to give him relief would be vain if he did not keep his eyes and lips closed. And Caracalla yielded, while her hand moved as lightly over the brow of the terrible man as when years ago it had soothed her mother to sleep.

When the sufferer, after a little time, murmured, with closed eyes—

“Perhaps I could sleep,” she felt as if great happiness had befallen her.

She listened attentively to every breath, and looked as if spell-bound into his face, until she was quite sure that sleep had completely overcome Cæsar.

She then crept gently on tiptoe to Philostratus, who had looked on in silent surprise at all that had passed between his sovereign and the girl. He, who was always inclined to believe in any miraculous cure, of which so many had been wrought by his hero Apollonius, thought he had actually witnessed one, and gazed with an admiration bordering on awe at the young creature who appeared to him to be a gracious instrument of the gods.

“Let me go now,” Melissa whispered to her friend. “He sleeps, and will not wake for some time.”

“At your command,” answered the philosopher,

respectfully. At the same moment a loud voice was heard from the next room, which Melissa recognized as her brother Alexander's, who impetuously insisted on his right of being allowed at any time to see the emperor.

"He will wake him," murmured the philosopher, anxiously; but Melissa with prompt determination threw her veil over her head and went into the adjoining room.

Philostratus at first heard violent language issuing from the mouth of Theocritus and the other courtiers, and the artist's answers were not less passionate. Then he recognized Melissa's voice; and when quiet suddenly reigned on that side of the door, the young girl again crossed the threshold.

She glanced toward Caracalla to see if he still slept, and then, with a sigh of relief, beckoned to her friend, and begged him in a whisper to escort her past the staring men. Alexander followed them.

Anger and surprise were depicted on his countenance, which was usually so happy. He had come with a report which might very likely induce Cæsar to order the release of his father and brother, and his heart had stood still with fear and astonishment when the favorite Theocritus had told him in the anteroom, in a way that made the blood rush into his face, that his sister had been for some time endeavoring to comfort the suffering emperor—and it was nearly midnight—

Quite beside himself, he wished to force his way into Cæsar's presence, but Melissa had at that moment come out and stood in his way, and had desired him and the noble Romans, in such a decided and commanding tone, to lower their voices, that they and her brother were speechless.



What had happened to his modest sister during the last few days? Melissa giving him orders which he feebly obeyed! It seemed impossible! But there was something reassuring in her manner. She must certainly have thought it right to act thus, and it must have been worthy of her, or she would not have carried her charming head so high, or looked him so freely and calmly in the face.

But how had she dared to come between him and his duty to his father and brother?

While he followed her closely and silently through the imperial rooms, the implicit obedience he had shown her became more and more difficult to comprehend; and when at last they stood in the empty corridor which divided Cæsar's quarters from those of the high-priest, and Philostratus had returned to his post at the side of his sovereign, he could hold out no longer, and cried to her indignantly:

"So far, I have followed you like a boy; I do not myself know why. But it is not yet too late to turn round; and I ask you, what gave you the right to prevent my doing my best for our people?"

"Your loud talking, that threatened to wake Cæsar," she replied, seriously. "His sleeping could alone save me from watching by him the whole night."

Alexander then felt sorry he had been so foolishly turbulent, and after Melissa had told him in a few words what she had gone through in the last few hours he informed her of what had brought him to visit the emperor so late.

Johannes the lawyer, Berenike's Christian freedman, he began, had visited their father in prison and had heard the order given to place Heron and Philip as state prisoners and oarsmen on board a galley.

This had taken place in the afternoon, and the Christian had further learned that the prisoners would be led to the harbor two hours before sunset. This was the truth, and yet the infamous Zminis had assured the emperor, at noon, that their father and Philip were already far on their way to Sardinia. The worthless Egyptian had, then, lied to the emperor; and it would most likely cost the scoundrel his neck. But for this, there would have been time enough next day. What had brought him there at so late an hour was the desire to prevent the departure of the galley; for John had heard, from the Christian harbor-watch that the anchor was not yet weighed. The ship could therefore only get out to sea at sunrise; the chain that closed the harbor would not be opened till then. If the order to stop the galley came much after day-break, she would certainly be by that time well under way, and their father and Philip might have succumbed to the hard rowing before a swift trireme could overtake and release them.

Melissa had listened to this information with mixed feelings. She had perhaps precipitated her father and brother into misery in order to save herself; for a terrible fate awaited the state-prisoners at the oars. And what could she do, an ignorant child, who was of so little use?

Andreas had told her that it was the duty of a Christian and of every good man, if his neighbor's welfare were concerned, to sacrifice his own fortunes; and for the happiness and lives of those dearest to her—for they, of all others, were her "neighbors"—she felt that she could do so. Perhaps she might yet succeed in repairing the mischief she had done when she had allowed the emperor to sleep without giving one thought to her father. Instead

of waking him, she had misused her new power over her brother, and, by preventing his speaking, had perhaps frustrated the rescue of her people.

But idle lamenting was of as little use here as at any other time; so she resolutely drew her veil closer round her head and called to her brother, "Wait here till I return!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Alexander, startled.

"I am going back to the invalid," she explained, decisively.

On this her brother seized her arm, and, wildly excited, forbade this step in the name of his father.

But at his vehement shout, "I will not allow it!" she struggled to free herself, and cried out to him:

"And you? Did not you, whose life is a thousand times more important than mine, of your own free-will go into captivity and to death in order to save our father?"

"It was for my sake that he had been robbed of his freedom," interrupted Alexander; but she added, quickly:

"And if I had not thought only of myself, the command to release him and Philip would by this time have been at the harbor. I am going."

Alexander then took his hand from her arm, and exclaimed, as if urged by some internal force, "Well, then, go!"

"And you," continued Melissa, hastily, "go and seek the lady Euryale. She is expecting me. Tell her all, and beg her in my name to go to rest. Also tell her I remembered the sentence about the time, which was fulfilled. . . . Mark the words. If I am running again into danger, tell her that I do

it because a voice says to me that it is right. And it is right, believe me, Alexander!"

The artist drew his sister to him and kissed her; yet she hardly understood his anxious good wishes; for his voice was choked by emotion.

He had taken it for granted that he should accompany her as far as the emperor's room, but she would not allow it. His reappearance would only lead to fresh quarrels.

He also gave in to this; but he insisted on returning here to wait for her.

After Melissa had vanished into Cæsar's quarters he immediately carried out his sister's wish, and told the lady Euryale of all that had happened.

Encouraged by the matron, who was not less shocked than he had been at Melissa's daring, he returned to the anteroom, where, at first, greatly excited, he walked up and down, and then sank on a marble seat to wait for his sister. He was frequently overpowered by sleep. The things that cast a shadow on his sunny mind vanished from him, and a pleasing dream showed him, instead of the alarming picture which haunted him before sleeping, the beautiful Christian Agatha.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE waiting-room was empty when Melissa crossed it for the second time. Most of the emperor's friends had retired to rest or into the city when they had heard that Cæsar slept; and the few who had remained behaved quietly when she appeared, for Philostratus had told them that the emperor held her in high esteem, as the only person who was able to give him comfort in his suffering by her peculiar and wonderful healing power.

In the tablinum, which had been converted into a sick-room, nothing was heard but the breathing and gentle snoring of the sleeping man. Even Philostratus was asleep on an arm-chair at the back of the room.

When the philosopher had returned, Caracalla had noticed him, and dozing, or perhaps in his dreams, he had ordered him to remain by him. So the learned man felt bound to spend the night there.

Epagathos, the freedman, was lying on a mattress from the dining-room; the corpulent physician slept soundly, and if he snored too loudly, old Adventus poked him and quietly spoke a word of warning to him. This man, who had formerly been a post messenger, was the only person who was conscious of Melissa's entrance; but he only blinked at her through his dim eyes, and, after he had silently considered why the young girl should have re-

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turned, he turned over in order to sleep himself; for he had come to the conclusion that this young, active creature would be awake and at hand if his master required anything.

His wondering as to why Melissa had returned, had led to many guesses, and had proved fruitless. "You can know nothing of women," was the end of his reflections, "if you do not know that what seems most improbable is what is most likely to be true. This maid is certainly not one of the flute-players or the like. Who knows what incomprehensible whim or freak may have brought her here? At any rate, it will be easier for her to keep her eyes open than it is for me."

He then signed to her and asked her quietly to fetch his cloak out of the next room, for his old body needed warmth; and Melissa gladly complied, and laid the caracalla over the old man's cold feet with obliging care.

She then returned to the side of the sick-bed, to wait for the emperor's awaking. He slept soundly; his regular breathing indicated this. The others also slept, and Adventus's light snore, mingling with the louder snoring of the physician, showed that he too had ceased to watch. The slumbering Philostratus now and then murmured incomprehensible words to himself; and the lion, who perhaps was dreaming of his freedom in his sandy home, whined low in his sleep.

She watched alone.

It seemed to her as if she were in the habitation of sleep, and as if phantoms and dreams were floating around her on the unfamiliar noises.

She was afraid, and the thought of being the only woman among so many men caused her extreme uneasiness.

She could not sit still.

Inaudibly as a shadow she approached the head of the sleeping emperor, holding her breath to listen to him. How soundly he slept! And she had come that she might talk to him. If his sleep lasted till sunrise, the pardon for her people would be too late, and her father and Philip, chained to a hard bench, would have to ply heavy oars as galley-slaves by the side of robbers and murderers. How terribly then would her father's wish to use his strength be granted! Was Philip, the narrow-chested philosopher, capable of bearing the strain which had so often proved fatal to stronger men?

She must wake the dreaded man, the only man who could possibly help her.

She now raised her hand to lay it on his shoulder, but she half withdrew it.

It seemed to her as if it was not much less wicked to rob a sleeping man of his rest, his best cure, than to take the life of a living being. It was not too late yet; for the harbor-chain would not be opened till the October sun had risen. He might enjoy his slumbers a little longer.

With this conclusion she once more sank down and listened to the noises which broke the stillness of the night.

How hideous they were, how revolting they sounded! The vulgarest of the sleepers, old Adventus, absolutely sawed the air with his snoring. The emperor's breathing was scarcely perceptible, and how nobly cut was the profile which she could see, the other side of his face leaning on the pillow! Had she any real reason to fear his awakening? Perhaps he was quite unlike what Berenike thought him to be. She remembered the sympathy she had felt for him when they had first met, and, in spite

of all the trouble she had experienced since, she no longer felt afraid. A thought then occurred to her which was sufficient excuse for disturbing the sick man's sleep. If she delayed it, she would be making him guilty of a fresh crime by allowing two blameless men to perish in misery. But she would first convince herself whether the time was pressing.

She looked out through the open window at the stars and across the open place lying at her feet. The third hour after midnight was past, and the sun would rise before long.

Down below all was quiet. Macrinus, the prætorian prefect, on hearing that the emperor had fallen into a refreshing sleep, in order that he might not be disturbed, had forbidden all loud signals, and ordered the camp to be closed to all the inhabitants of the city; so the girl heard nothing but the regular footsteps of the sentries and the shrieks of the owls returning to their nests in the roof of the Serapeum. The wind from the sea drove the clouds before it across the sky, and the plain covered with tents resembled a sea tossed into high white waves. The camp had been reduced during the afternoon; for Caracalla had carried out his threat of that morning by quartering a portion of the picked troops in the houses of the richest Alexandrians.

Melissa, bending far out, looked toward the north. The sea-breeze blew her hair into her face. Perhaps on the ocean whence it came the high waves would, in a few hours, be tossing the ship on which her father and brother, seated at the oar, would be toiling as disgraced galley-slaves. That must not, could not be!

Hark! what was that?

She heard a light whisper. In spite of strict orders, a loving couple were passing below. The



wife of the centurion Martialis, who had been separated for some time from her husband, had at his entreaty come secretly from Kanopus, where she had charge of Seleukus's villa, to see him, as his services prevented his going so far away. They now stood whispering and making love in the shadow of the temple. Melissa could not hear what they said, yet it reminded her of the sacred night hour when she confessed her love to Diodoros. She felt as if she were standing by his bedside, and his faithful eyes met hers. She would not, for all that was best in the world, have awakened him yesterday at the Christian's house, though the awakening would have brought her fresh promises of love; and yet she was on the point of robbing another of his only cure, the sleep the gods had sent him. But then she loved Diodoros, and what was Cæsar to her? It had been a matter of life and death with her lover, while disturbing Caracalla would only postpone his recovery a few hours at the utmost. It was she who had procured the imperial sleeper his rest, which she could certainly restore to him, even if she now woke him. Just now she had vowed for the future not to care about her own welfare, and that had at first made her doubtful about Caracalla; but had it not really been exceedingly selfish to lose the time which could bring freedom to her father and brother, only to protect her own soul from the reproach of an easily forgiven wrong? With the question—

"What is your duty?" all doubts left her, and no longer on tiptoe, but with a firm, determined tread, she walked toward the slumberer's couch, and the outrage which she shrank from committing would, she saw, be a deed of kindness; for she found the emperor with perspiring brow groan-

ing and frightened by a severe nightmare. He cried with the dull, toneless voice of one talking in his sleep, as if he saw her close by :

"Away, mother, I say! He or I! Out of the way! You will not? But I, I— If you—"

At the same he threw up his hands and gave a dull, painful cry.

"He is dreaming of his brother's murder," rushed through Melissa's mind, and in the same instant she laid her hand on his arm and with urgent entreaty cried in his ear: "Wake up, Cæsar, I implore you! Great Cæsar, awake!"

Then he opened his eyes, and a low, prolonged "Ah!" rang from his tortured breast.

He then, with a deep breath and perplexed glance, looked round him; and as his eyes fell on the young girl his features brightened, and soon wore a happy expression, as if he experienced a great joy.

"You?" he asked, with pleased surprise. "You, maiden, still here! It must be nearly dawn? I slept well till just now. But then at the last— Oh, it was fearful!— Adventus!"

Melissa, however, interrupted this cry, exhorting the emperor to be quiet by putting her finger to her lips; and he understood her and willingly obeyed, especially as she had guessed what he required from the chamberlain, Adventus. She handed him the cloth that lay on the table for him to wipe his streaming forehead. She then brought him drink, and after Caracalla had sat up refreshed, and felt that the pain, which, after a sharp attack, lasted sometimes for days, had now already left him, he said, quite gently, mindful of her sign:

"How much better I feel already; and for this I thank you, Roxana; yes, you know. I like to feel

like Alexander, but usually— It is certainly a pleasant thing to be ruler of the universe, for if we wish to punish or reward, no one can limit us. You, child, shall learn that it is Cæsar whom you have laid under such obligations. Ask what you will, and I will grant it you."

She whispered eagerly to him:

"Release my father and brother."

"Always the same thing," answered Caracalla, peevishly. "Do you know of nothing better to wish for?"

"No, my lord, no!" cried Melissa, with importunate warmth. "If you will give me what I most care for—"

"I will, yes, I will," interrupted the emperor in a softer voice; but suddenly shrugging his shoulders, he continued, regretfully: "But you must have patience; for, by the Egyptian's orders, your people have been for some time afloat and at sea."

"No!" the girl assured him. "They are still here. Zminis has shamefully deceived you;" and then she informed him of what she had learned from her brother.

Caracalla, in obedience to a softer impulse, had wished to show himself grateful to Melissa. But her demand displeased him; for the sculptor and his son, the philosopher, were the security that should keep Melissa and the painter attached to him. But though his distrust was so strong, offended dignity and the tormenting sense of being deceived caused him to forget everything else; he flew into a rage, and called loudly the names of Epagathos and Adventus.

His voice, quavering with fury, awakened the others also out of their sleep; and after he had *shortly* and severely rebuked them for their lazy-

ness, he commissioned Epagathos to give the prefect, Macrinus, immediate orders not to allow the ship on which Heron and Philip were, to leave the harbor; to set the captives at liberty; and to throw Zminis, the Egyptian, into prison, heavily chained.

When the freedman remarked, humbly, that the prefect was not likely to be found, as he had purposed to be present again that night at the exorcisms of the magician, Serapion, Cæsar commanded that Macrinus should be called away from the miracle-monger's house, and the orders given him.

"And if I can not find him?" asked Epagathos.

"Then, once more, events will prove how badly I am served," answered the emperor. "In any case you can act the prefect, and see that my orders are carried out."

The freedman left hastily, and Caracalla sank back exhausted on the pillows.

Melissa let him rest a little while; then she approached him, thanked him profusely, and begged him to keep quiet, lest the pain should return and spoil the approaching day.

He then asked the time, and when Philostratus, who had walked to the window, explained that the fifth hour after midnight was past, Caracalla bade him prepare a bath.

The physician sanctioned this wish, and Cæsar then gave his hand to the girl, saying, feebly and in a gentle voice: "The pain still keeps away. I should be better if I could moderate my impatience. An early bath often does me good after a bad night. Only go. The sleep that you know so well how to give to others, you scarcely allow to visit you. I only beg that you will be at hand. We shall both, I think, feel strengthened when next I call you."

Melissa then bade him a grateful farewell; but as she was approaching the doorway he called again after her, and asked her with an altered voice, shortly and sternly:

"You will agree with your father if he abuses me?"

"What an idea!" she answered, energetically. "He knows who robbed him of his liberty, and from me shall he learn who has restored it to him."

"Good!" murmured the emperor. "Yet remember this also: I need your assistance and that of your brother's, the painter. If your father attempts to alienate you—"

Here he suddenly let fall his arm, which he had raised threateningly, and continued in a confidential whisper: "But how can I ever show you anything but kindness? Is it not so? You already feel the secret tie— You know? Am I mistaken when I fancy that it grieves you to be separated from me?"

"Certainly not," she replied, gently, and bowed her head.

"Then go," he continued, kindly. "The day will come yet when you will feel that I am as necessary to your soul as you are to mine. But you do not yet know how impatient I can be. I must be able to think of you with pleasure—always with pleasure—always."

Thereupon he nodded to her, and his eyelids remained for some time in spasmodic movement.

Philostratus was prepared to accompany the young girl, but Caracalla prevented him by calling:

"Lead me to my bath. If it does me good, as I trust it will, I have many things to talk over with you."

Melissa did not hear the last words. Gladly and quickly she hurried through the empty, dimly lighted rooms, and found Alexander in a sitting position, half asleep and half awake, with closed eyes. Then she drew near to him on tiptoe, and, as his nodding head fell on his breast, she laughed and woke him with a kiss.

The lamps were not yet burned out, and, as he looked into her face with surprise, his also brightened, and jumping up quickly he exclaimed :

"All's well ; we have you back again, and you have succeeded ! Our father—I see it in your face—and Philip also, are at liberty ! "

"Yes, yes, yes," she answered, gladly ; "and now we will go together and fetch them ourselves from the harbor."

Alexander raised his eyes and arms to heaven in rapture, and Melissa imitated him ; and thus, without words, though with fervent devotion, they with one accord thanked the gods for their merciful ruling.

They then set out together, and Alexander said : "I feel as if nothing but gratitude flowed through all my veins. At any rate, I have learned for the first time what fear is. That evil guest certainly haunts this place. Let us go now. On the way you shall tell me everything."

"Only one moment's patience," she begged, cheerfully, and hurried into the chief priest's rooms. The lady Euryale was still expecting her, and as she kissed her she looked with sincere pleasure into her bright but tearful eyes.

At first she was bent on making Melissa rest ; for she would yet require all her strength. But she saw that the girl's wish to go and meet her father was justifiable ; she placed her own mantle over her

shoulders—for the air was cool before sunrise—and at last accompanied her into the anteroom.

Directly the girl had disappeared, she turned to her sister-in-law's slave, who had waited there the whole night by order of his mistress, and desired him to go and report to her what he had learned about Melissa.

The brother and sister met the slave Argutis outside the Serapeum. He had heard at Seleukus's house where his young mistress was staying, and had made friends with the chief priest's servants.

When, late in the evening, he heard that Melissa was still with Cæsar, he had become so uneasy that he had waited the whole night through, first on the steps of a staircase, then walking up and down outside the Serapeum. With a light heart he now accompanied the couple as far as the Aspendia quarter of the town, and he then only parted from them in order that he might inform poor old Dido of his good news, and make preparations for the reception of the home-comers.

After that Melissa hurried along, arm in arm with her brother, through the quiet streets.

Youth, to whom the present belongs entirely, only cares to know the bright side of the future; and even Melissa in her joy at being able to restore liberty to her beloved relations, hardly thought at all of the fact that, when this was done and Cæsar should send for her again, there would be new dangers to surmount.

Delighted with her grand success, she first told her brother what her experiences had been with the suffering emperor. Then she started on the recollections of her visit to her lover, and when Alexander opened his heart to her and assured her with fiery ardor that he would not rest till he had won

the heart of the lovely Christian, Agatha, she gladly allowed him to talk and promised him her assistance. At last they deliberated how the favor of Cæsar—who, Melissa assured him, was cruelly misunderstood—was to be won for their father and Philip; and finally they both imagined the surprise of the old man if he should be the first to meet them after being set at liberty.

The way was far, and when they reached the sea, by the Cæsareum in the Bruchium, the palatial quarter of the town, the first glimmer of approaching dawn was showing behind the peninsula of Lochias. The sea was rough, and tossed with heavy, oily waves on the Choma that ran out into the sea like a finger, and on the walls of the Timoneum at its point, where Antonius had hidden his disgrace after the battle of Actium.

Alexander stopped by the pillared temple of Poseidon, which stood close on the shore, between the Choma and the theatre, and, looking toward the flat, horseshoe-shaped coast of the opposite island which still lay in darkness, he asked:

"Do you still remember when we went with our mother over to Antirhodos, and how she allowed us to gather shells in the little harbor? If she were alive to-day, what more could we wish for?"

"That the emperor was gone," exclaimed the girl from the depths of her heart; "that Diodoros were well again; that father could use his hands as he used, and that I might stay with him until Diodoros came to fetch me, and then . . . oh, if only something could happen to the empire that Cæsar might go away—far away, to the farthest hyperborean land!"

"That will soon happen now," answered Alexander. "Philostratus says that the Romans will remain at the utmost a week longer."



"So long?" asked Melissa, startled; but Alexander soon pacified her with the assurance that seven days flew speedily by, and when one looked back on them they seemed to shrink into only as many hours.

"But do not," he continued, cheerfully, "look into the future! We will rejoice, for everything is going so well now!"

He stopped here suddenly and gazed anxiously at the sea, which was no longer completely obscured by the vanishing shadows of night. Melissa looked in the direction of his pointing hand, and when he cried with great excitement, "That is no little boat, it is a ship, and a large one, too!" Melissa added, eagerly:

"It is already near the Diabathra. It will reach the Alveus Steganus in a moment, and pass the pharos."

"But yonder is the morning star in the heavens, and the fire is still blazing on the tower," interrupted her brother. "Not till it has been extinguished will they open the outside chain. And yet that ship is steering in a northwesterly direction. It certainly comes out of the royal harbor." He then drew his sister on faster, and when, in a few minutes, they reached the harbor gate, he cried out, much relieved:

"Look there! The chain is still across the entrance. I see it clearly."

"And so do I," said Melissa, decidedly; and while her brother knocked at the gate-house of the little harbor, she continued, eagerly:

"No ships dare go out before sunrise, on account of the rocks—Epagathos said so just now—and that one near the pharos—"

But there was no time to put her thoughts into

words; for the broad harbor gate was thrown noisily open, and a troop of Roman soldiers streamed out, followed by several Alexandrian men-at-arms. After them came a prisoner loaded with chains, with whom a leading Roman in warrior's dress was conversing. Both were tall and haggard, and when they approached the brother and sister they recognized in them Macrinus the prætorian prefect, while the prisoner was Zminis the informer.

But the Egyptian also noticed the artist and his companion. His eyes sparkled brightly, and with triumphant scorn he pointed out to sea.

The magician Serapion had persuaded the prefect to let the Egyptian go free. Nothing was yet known in the harbor of Zminis's disgrace, and he had been promptly obeyed as usual, when, spurred on by the magician and his old hatred, he gave the order for the galley which carried the sculptor and his son on board to weigh anchor in spite of the early hour.

Heron and Philip, with chains on their feet, were now rowing on the same bench with the worst criminals; and the old artist's two remaining children stood gazing after the ship that carried away their father and brother into the distance. Melissa stood mute, with tearful eyes, while Alexander, quite beside himself, tried to relieve his rage and grief by empty threats.

Soon, however, his sister's remonstrances caused him to restrain himself, and make inquiry as to whether Macrinus, in obedience to the emperor's orders, had sent a State ship after the galley.

This had been done, and comforted, though sadly disappointed, they started on their way home.

The sun in the mean time had risen, and the streets were filling with people.

They met the old sculptor Lysander, who had

been a friend of their father's, outside the magnificent pile of buildings of the Cæsareum. The old man took a deep interest in Heron's fate; and, when Alexander asked him modestly what he was doing at that early hour, he pointed to the interior of the building, where the statues of the emperors and empresses stood in a wide circle surrounding a large court-yard, and invited them to come in with him. He had not been able to complete his work—a marble statue of Julia Domna, Caracalla's mother—before the arrival of the emperor. It had been placed here yesterday evening. He had come to see how it looked in its new position.

Melissa had often seen the portrait of Julia on coins and in various pictures, but to-day she was far more strongly attracted than she had ever been before to look in the face of the mother of the man who had so powerfully influenced her own existence and that of her people.

The old master had seen Julia many years ago in her own home at Emesa, as the daughter of Bassianus the high-priest of the Sun in that town; and later, after she had become empress, he had been commanded to take her portrait for her husband, Septimus Severus. While Melissa gazed on the countenance of the beautiful statue, the old artist related how Caracalla's mother had in her youth won all hearts by her wealth of intellect, and the extraordinary knowledge which she had easily acquired and continually added to, through intercourse with learned men. They learned from him that his heart had not remained undisturbed by the charms of his royal model, and Melissa became more and more absorbed in her contemplation of this beautiful work of art.

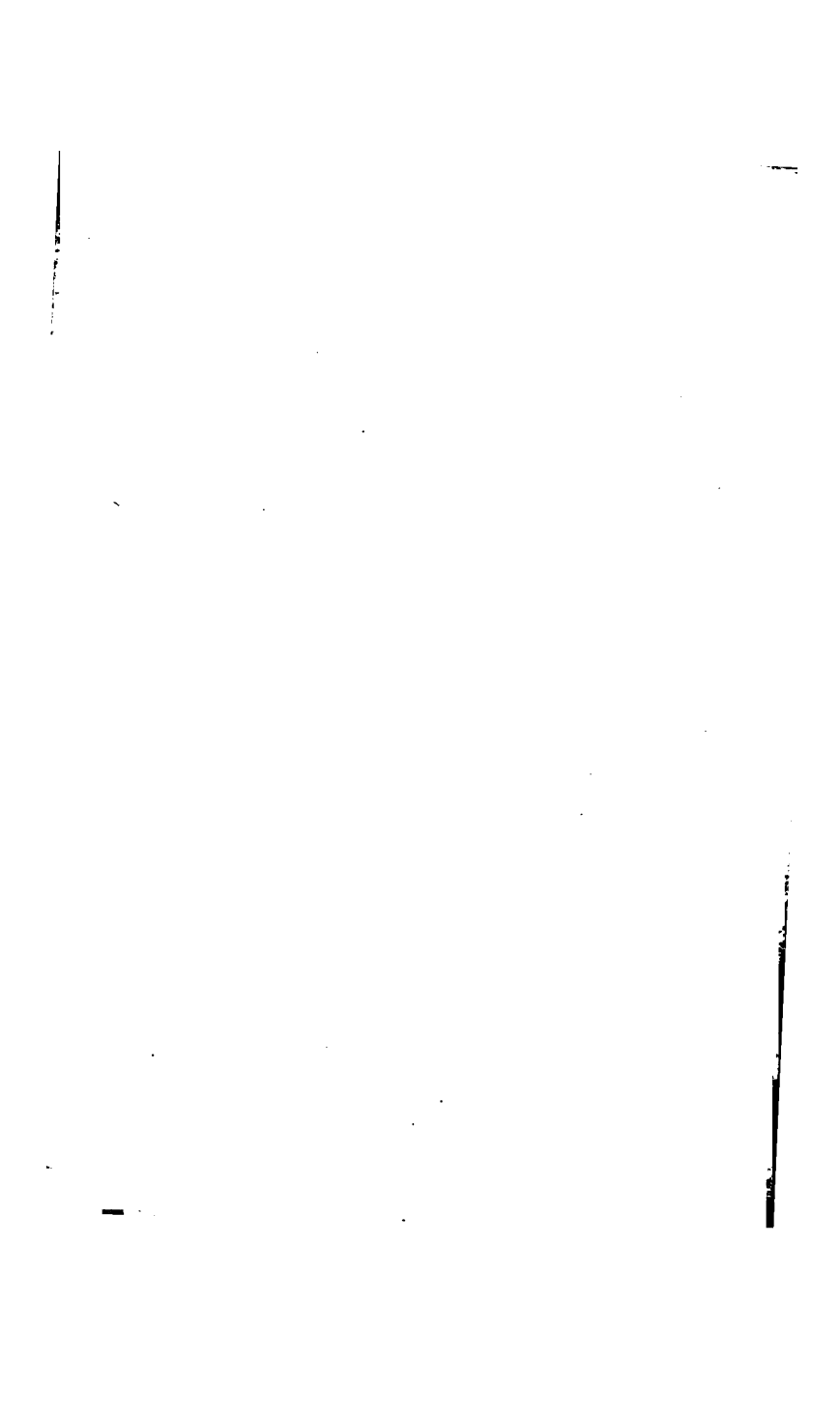
Lysander had represented the imperial widow

standing in flowing draperies, which fell to her feet. She held her charming, youthful head bent slightly on one side, and her right hand held aside the veil which covered the back of her head and fell lightly on her shoulders, a little open over the throat. Her face looked out from under it as if she were listening to a fine song or an interesting speech. Her thick, slightly waving hair framed the lovely oval of her face under the veil, and Alexander agreed with his sister when she expressed the wish that she might but once see this rarely beautiful creature. But the sculptor assured them that they would be disappointed, for time had treated her cruelly.

"I have shown her," he continued, "as she charmed me a generation ago. What you see standing before you is the young girl Julia; I was not capable of representing her as matron or mother. The thought of her son would have spoiled everything,"

"He is capable of better emotions," Alexander declared.

"May be," answered the old man—"I do not know them. May your father and brother be restored to you soon!—I must get to work!"



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